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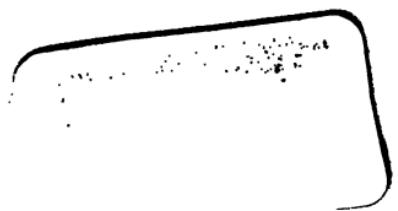
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WITHERS'S
POEMS.
VOL. II.



Mr. Busroe:

to

Augusta Sutton.

Sep^{te} 3rd 1857.



P O E M S

UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS:

BY

J. R. WITHERS,

FORDHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

VOL. II.

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MACINTOSH, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1856.

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DEDICATION.

THIS SMALL VOLUME IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, BY KIND PERMISSION,
TO
MISS HALL,
OF WESTON COLVILLE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE,
WHOSE KIND AND BENEVOLENT DISPOSITION IS TOO WELL
KNOWN TO NEED ANY EULOGY,
FROM HER GRATEFUL AND OBLIGED
HUMBLE SERVANT,

J. R. WITHERS.

JUNE, 1856.



E R R A T A.

Page 34, second line, for "*unmindly*" read "*unmindful*."

Page 35, the quotation or motto, for "*every days repast*" read "*report*."

Page 47, fourteenth line, for "*train*" read "*trail*."

Page 53, seventh line, for "*sought*" read "*taught*." Also line ten, for "*thou*" read "*thee*."

Page 69, eighth line, for "*in*" read "*on*."

Page 90, seventh line, for "*scource*" read "*source*."

Page 128, fourth line, for "*by*" read "*my*."

Page 138, third line from bottom, read "*in the skies*."

Page 178, fourth line, last verse, for "*shines*" read "*shine*."

Page 200, sixth line, for "*own*" read "*home*."

Page 201, eleventh line, for "*creation*" read "*creative*."



P R E F A C E ;

WITH A FEW PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

ENCOURAGED by many kind friends, and a charitable exhibition of feeling on the part of the public generally on a former occasion, I have again ventured to try their patience and forbearance by sending forth a second volume, hoping that the educated and discerning will not criticize too severely the rustic song of an untutored muse. I would ask you, gentle reader, to be a little blind to the faults (for there are many), or to look upon them in that spirit of charity which hides a multitude of sins.

Consider that I have had but few opportunities for learning. When I was a child, there were no National or British Schools, and my parents were too poor to send me to more expensive institutions: so I ~~was~~ first taught to read.

by my mother, and then improved myself, and gained what little I now possess by my own untiring love for books—particularly books of poetry. I am pretty well acquainted with most of our English poets, by buying some, but more frequently borrowing. Oh, the delight it was to me to read some gifted author for the first time! Did I not almost “devour his discourse?” I well remember taking Shakespeare in sixpenny numbers, when I was working for seven shillings a-week, and had to maintain myself and pay for lodgings; and even then I regretted not the loss of a day’s work in wet weather (scanty as my earnings were), if I could spend it in reading. I have sat up many nights reading Milton when others have been sleeping; and passed many, many hours with Shakespeare, when perhaps I should have been otherwise employed. And thus my youth passed away, with but few enjoyments in the estimation of those around me, whose company I shunned, preferring the solitary walk in fields or lanes to the noise and laughter of the streets—calm communion with silent nature to the mad excitement of intoxication—and the lay of the nightingale to the song of the drunkard.

In all my lonely musings I had bread to eat that they knew not of: from a boy I loved the trees and flowers, woods and waters, ~~and~~ have conversed more with them than

with men. I loved all that was beautiful in nature; and if I cannot express myself as a poet, I have always felt as one. Living in a country which is flat and uninteresting—whose landscapes can only at best be styled pretty; caged and cooped up by poverty, I just peeped forth between the bars, and wondered what the distant world was like. I longed for the majestic and sublime that I had heard of—the mountains, rocks, and waterfalls made sacred to me by song of bard; and desiring to become a little more acquainted with the world, I once set out on a Quixotic journey, “to see if books and swains reported right.” I went to Lynn, and got on board a ship bound for North Shields, at which place I arrived, after four days’ tossing about, and suffering as most landlubbers do when first they go to sea. But I had not properly counted the cost, as it took nearly all my little money to get there; and I was compelled to walk back, which I did in nine days. I changed my last sixpence when I was more than two hundred miles from home: then I had to meet with all the coldness, insults, and rebuffs which people who can sit down to a comfortable meal are privileged to bestow on that ancient fraternity called beggars. Although I had not spent my money in riotous living, I returned poor as the “prodigal,” and nearly as ragged: penniless and almost shoeless, footsore, weary, and hungry, I finished my

grand tour. But it was something to talk of, for I had been on the great deep; yes, and learned the difference between "larboard" and "starboard;" and I had seen some hills in Yorkshire that to me were mountains, and crossed wide dreary moors, covered with heather and broom: so that altogether it was almost as well as going to Scotland. I had seen the coal mines at Durham, the high cliffs at Whitby, and the ruins of the abbey there, immortalized by Scott in his "*Marmion*." I sighed that I had not a few shillings more; then I could have seen "*Melrose*," perhaps by the "pale moonlight." But I had seen the gay company on the beach at Scarborough and at Bridlington, and filled my pockets with shells and seaweeds; and I had crossed the Tyne and the Tees, and climbed steep hills, and descended deep dells and glens, overhung with birch and mountain ash, where purple heather clothed the banks, and foxgloves nodded over my head; and I had strolled along the docks at Hull, and smelt the odour of her oil and blubber; and I had steamed up the Humber and the Trent, a kind gentleman to whom I had told my tale having paid my fare to Gainsborough; and I had seen Lincoln Cathedral and Boston stump, and left my tobacco-box at Fossdike bridge in lieu of twopence (which I had not), the usual charge for going over. All this I had to talk about when I ~~reached~~ home, and considered myself quite

a traveller, and felt something like the monkey that had seen the world. I looked down with pity on those whose fate it was to be “a useless dunghill weed, and rot just where they grew.”

I have no thought that I shall ever see the gay city of Paris or the hoary ruins of Rome; the Bay of Naples or Vesuvius; the vines of France or Italy; the lakes of Switzerland or the boiling springs of Iceland. My ambition does not extend so far as Niagara falls and the wide-spread prairies of the Far West, nor yet soar so high as the Alps; but I do not give up all hope of seeing something more of my own country. Who knows but that I may one day see Dove Dale, the Peak caverns, the lakes of Westmoreland, or the Isle of Wight? I had never seen London till last year, when a gentleman whose kindness I shall never forget gave me an invitation to stay a week with him there, and showed me every day some new wonder. A heavy debt of gratitude I owe that gentleman and his family; and here I take the opportunity of returning my sincere thanks to all my kind friends, and to the Editors of the *Cambridge Chronicle* and *Independent Press*, the *Patriot*, the *Family Herald*, the *Era*, and the *Cottage Gardener*, for their favourable notices of my first appearance before the public.

It may be thought presumption ~~to~~ me to send forth this

little book, just after Tennyson and Longfellow have charmed the world with "Maud" and "Hiawatha." I know that

"The eyes of men,
After a well graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him who enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious;"

and the chance is that it will be hissed by some, and by others looked upon with silent contempt: but the kind-hearted, the charitable, and forbearing will make every allowance for one situated as I am, who makes no pretensions to the grandeur of epic, the wit of epigram, or the tenderness of elegy—no "thoughts that burn," or song that will "take the imprisoned soul, and lap it in elysium;" but simple thoughts, jingled into simple rhythm, of which the best that can be said of them is that they are not immoral, but such as I trust Providence will prosper, and the public will not condemn.

J. R. WITHERS,

FORDHAM.

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P O E M S.

THE DREAM OF MARY STUART.

In fitful and restless sleep she lay
On a bed of the softest down ;
And grief—not age—had bleached gray
Her locks of golden brown :
For weary years had passed away,
Since she wore the Stuart's crown.

And strange was the dream of the captive Queen
In the midnight dark and deep;
So long a prisoner had she been
She now had ceased to weep:
Yet much in life that she had seen
Came back in that troubled sleep.

She dream'd she again was a playful child
In Stirling's royal towers,
And saw her native mountains wild,
And plucked the heather flowers,
Ere passion had her heart beguiled—
Ere she knew love's witching powers.

Again in her beauty and youth she stood
By a princely husband's side,
So lovely, accomplished, and so good,
So meet for the Dauphin's bride:
Then the scene it changed to Holyrood,
On the night that Darnley died.

Again she was decked in jewels bright,
And led off the sprightly dance,
And moved through the hall like a form of light
In the merry Court of France:
Then a tournament rose on her sight,
With sword, and spear, and lance.

And armed knights, and ladies fair,
On palfreys pranced the ground ;
And thrilling music filled the air,
And wit and jest went round :
Then she hunted with gallants debonaire,
With horn and hawk and hound.

And now a dark and heavy cloud
Hung o'er her like a pall ;
She heard the trumpet pealing loud,
And heard the bugle call :
Surrounded now by an armed crowd,
She heard the drawbridge fall.

A captive in Lochleven's tower,
She hides her humbled pride,
And bitterly laments the hour
That made her Bothwell's bride.
At length she hears a midnight rower
O'er the silent waters glide.

In buoyant hope with the Douglas bold
She stepped in the rocking boat;
The misty air was damp and cold,
And harsh the nightbird's note:
But tales of faithful friends he told,
As over the lake they float.

On Langside field she saw again,
As flowers by a frost,
Her hopes cut off: her soldiers slain,
She murmured, "All is lost!"
Yet thinking shelter hence to gain,
Swiftly the border crossed.

“Land of the mountain and the flood,”
She whispered in her dream,
“The rocky glen, the shaggy wood,
The poet’s darling theme—
How oft enraptured have I stood,
And watched thy gliding stream!

“Land of the heather and the broom,
For ever dear to me,
Where Bruce and Wallace found a tomb,
I never more shall see.
Oh, had I met an early doom
And died, loved land, in thee!”

Sweet strains of music, soft and low,
Some unseen minstrel brings :
Why throbs her brain and bosom now ?
There’s magic in the strings.
Ah ! well that plaintive voice she’ll know ;
'Tis Rizzio plays and sings.

RIZZIO'S SONG.

“ Italia’s fair and cloudless skies
No more I wish to see ;
Turin’s maids’ bewitching eyes
Have now no charms for me :
Scotia’s hills are wild and bare,
Yet there I love to rove ;
Scotia’s maids have golden hair,
But only thee I love.

“ The world in one wide deluge lies
To me thou art the ark ;
Or like a beacon in the skies,
When all around is dark.
To thee I fly with trembling wing
A worn and weary dove ;
My heart is saddest while I sing
Unless I sing of love.

“ I saw to-day a tethered deer
Its lessening circles make,
And ev’ry round coiled it more near
Unto its centre stake:
Thus, fair one, am I bound to thee;
My heart can never rove;
A willing captive still I’d be,
In silken cords of love.

“ I’ve seen the moth (poor, foolish thing !)
Flit round the taper’s blaze;
At last it burnt its fluttering wing,
And perished in the rays.
I can’t at humble distance wait,
Though me thou’rt far above;
I know one day ’twill be my fate
To die for thee and love.”

Softly then stole across her mind
The peace of days long gone :
The bleeding heart doth moments find
Some hope to rest upon.
'Twas but the lulling of the wind
Before the storm came on.

The strains yet lingered on the chords ;
The spell her senses bound :
Then rose a din of angry words
From armed men around,
And Rizzio fell beneath their swords,
With many a frightful wound.

Then o'er that pale and marble face
What various shadows passed !
Love, grief, and pity might ye trace,
But these they faded fast ;
And deep revenge then took their place,
And settled there at last.

Now with a group of maidens gay
She sits an honoured guest,
And heard the merry pipers play,
And graced the marriage feast;
Yet still within her bosom lay
Dark thoughts that would not rest.

She knows that darksome night concealed
A deed of awful name,
And vainly sought to find a shield
To screen herself from blame,
When lo! from the lonely Kirk of Field
Shot up a pointed flame.

Ten thousand fiery serpents now
Seemed hissing round her brain;
Large drops rose on her pallid brow,
And trickled down like rain;
And all the waves of by-gone woe
Rolled over her again.

A gulf before her seemed to be—
She stood upon the brink :
A yawning hell of misery,
That made her spirit shrink.
“ O God,” she shrieked in agony,
“ Save, save me, or I sink !”

Again she sat in an ancient room,
With a letter in her hand,
And o'er it in the evening's gloom
The fatal lines she scanned—
“ Let Tudor's daughter meet her doom,”
She wrote with trembling hand.

The lights and shadows danced, as when
A lamp its fuel lacks ;
Surrounded now by noble men,
And now by wheels and racks :
Then England's crown appeared, and then
The scaffold and the axe.

Through flowery fields she wandered free,
And listened to the tones
Of happy birds, whose melody
Was mingled still with moans ;
And strains of sweetest minstrelsy
Were mixed with hollow groans.

She knelt in an ancient carved stall,
And heard the vesper hymn,
Where the light fell on the pillars tall
From windows stained and dim ;
And grotesque faces on the wall
Looked goblin-like and grim.

The martyrs and saints looked scowling down,
Coldly on her distress ;
The carving and corbels to fiends had grown,
And mocked her wretchedness ;
The rigid old statues all seemed to frown,
So stern and motionless.

The wind as it howled through the trees in wrath
Spake words of fear and dread;
In flowers that grew in her daily path
Some well-known name she read;
The brands that smouldered on the hearth
Took features of the dead.

The sun rose bright one summer's morn,
Then came a noble peer,
And kindled hope in her heart forlorn,
And spake of freedom near.
At eve she saw him headless borne
Away on a blood-stained bier.

Again she stood before the bar,
And heard her sentence passed;
Around on her accusers there
A look of scorn she cast:
So stands a tree, with branches bare,
Beneath the lightning's blast.

Before a regal throne she knelt,
And humbly sued for grace
In tones of grief, but could not melt
The heart of Tudor's race,
Who not for sex or kindred felt,
But turned away her face.

And now awoke the Stuart's pride—
“ And have I vainly striven
To soften one by blood allied,
To whom no heart is given ?
The mercy here to me denied
Henceforth I'll seek in heaven.

“ Oh ! mine has been a chequer'd life
Of mingled good and ill ;
And fell remorse's keenest knife
Will wound, yet will not kill :
But soon will cease this weary strife—
My throbbing heart, be still.

“ Away, away, ye earthly toys,
Ye bubbles of a day !
The world with all its toil and noise
Is sinking fast away ;
My soul athirste for purer joys,
That never know decay.

“ O Father, hear my humble prayer,
And cleanse my soul from sin ;
The world for me spread many a snare,
And folly drove me in :
Yet, oh ! a contrite mourner spare,
Cast off by friend and kin.

“ If I have wandered from the road,
My path has been through sorrow,
And conscience, like a piercing goad,
Hath filled my mind with horror ;
But life with all its galling load
I shall lay down to-morrow.

“To-morrow on my waking sight
What unknown scenes will beam—
The glories of the world of light,
Beyond the poet’s dream !
And I to reach this land so bright
Must cross death’s sullen stream.”

Trembling, aloft her spirit springs,
And cleaves the starry dome ;
And now to earth again it clings,
As loath to leave its home :
Then sang a voice to silver strings,
Inviting her to come.

SONG OF THE ANGEL.

“ Child of earth, thou hast suffered long,
Come now and join in a holier song ;
Come to that world, so fair and bright—
Come to the day that knows no night—

Come to that home of rest and peace—
Come where sorrows for ever cease.
The conqueror's palm in the heavenly spheres
Is watered on earth by the penitent's tears.

“ The world is too cold for a heart like thine ;
Come where seraphs in glory shine :
Grieve not that here thou hast suffered loss,
'Twas but to refine thee from earthly dross.
Fear not the block nor the headsman's stroke,
Like a bird thou'l escape when thy fetters are broke :
Regret not the loss of crown, kingdom, or friends—
One moment in heaven will make thee amends.

“ Come where life's river for ever is flowing,
And flowers are fadeless, and fruits ever growing ;
Come, for the angels are longing to greet thee ;
Come, for bright spirits are waiting to meet thee.
Hark ! how the harps of the ransomed are playing !
Hear how they chide thee for longer delaying !

Come to thy Father's more glorious home:
Child of affliction, don't linger but come."

Her hopes were raised, her heart was calm,
No clouds her vision met,
For hushed was every boding storm,
And gone each vain regret;
But still appeared one other form,
That dragged her earthward yet.

For then before her stood her son,
And nobles to him bow;
She saw the British crown put on
The Royal Stuart's brow.
"Enough," she cried, "the vision's gone:
Adieu to all below!"

And thus around the clay-built shed
The lingering swallow flies,

Now stooping low, now high o'erhead,
A short excursion tries :
And now he's plumed his wings and fled
Away to brighter skies.

She woke ! The world in darkness lay :
Then crowed the herald cock ;
Slowly the morn broke, cold and gray,
And heavily tolled the clock :
And Mary Stuart laid that day
Her head upon the block.

REMINISCENCES OF THE YEAR 1855.

Thou old and cold and shivering year,
Now tottering downward to thy grave,
Thy thin robe fluttering in the wind;
Scanty thy locks with ivy bound;
Thy plume a feather of the reed,
All fringed thick with hoary rime:
Chill is thy breath, hollow thine eye,
And from thine ears hang icicles.
I see thee cowering o'er the hearth,
Snapping the few long hoarded sticks,
And swelling out thy withered cheeks
In puffing them into a blaze.
Oh ! for a gossip with thee, hag,

For thou hast much experience gained,
And can'st discourse on many things—
Of fruitful fields, and barren wastes,
Plenteous harvests, and pinching want,
And the extremes of heat and cold,
Of births and deaths, of hopes and fears,
Of joyous moments, nights of woe,
And pillows wet with silent tears.
Oh! thou can'st tell of aching hearts,
And sighs sent after absent ones,
And pondering what their fate may be—
Sad accidents by flood and flame,
Hostile ranks, and towns beleaguered,
And battle-fields bestrewn with dead,
The mother's and the widow's wail,
And nations trembling in suspense.
Garrulous in this thy dotage,
Will we but listen, much thou'l't tell.
Feeble and decrepid as thou art,
I've not forgot when thou wast born:

Anxious friends sat up to greet thee,
And merry peals proclaimed thy birth.
Oh ! 'twas a time of mirth and song,
Of dancing, feasting, and delight,
Of kindly wishes given and received,
And tokens of affection sent from far.
Wrapt in robes of snowy ermine,
At first I saw thee slumbering lie,
Calm, quiet, still, and beautiful :
But soon thy chubby dimpled hands
Were playing with the crocus cups,
And gingling silver snowdrop bells.
And now a toddling fair wee thing,
Dressed in a frock of palest green,
All sprigged with pinky hawthorn buds,
And bordered with hepaticas,
Thou lov'dst to tease old Father Frost,
Pulling his grizly crispy beard,
Shaking the powder from his locks,
Spoiling with fingers moist and warm

The pictures of his palsied hand.
One day, in thy mischievous glee,
Thou turned'st the taps of all his casks,
Letting his icebound nectar flow
O'er all the earth in thousand streams.
His statue that the boys had reared
Thou didst mutilate and destroy ;
Till, wearied with thy many pranks,
He frowning took his leave at last,
And sought his favourite polar home.

Grown stronger now and more robust,
I saw thee scampering o'er the hills,
Filling thy lap with daisies white,
Or groping on the mossy bank
Amongst the old fantastic roots
For timid violets nestling there,
Or pale primrose that loves the shade.
I've seen thee backward toss thy hair,
And like a vixen rend thy clothes :
Wayward and peevish wast thou then,

Rude, pert, and wild—a little shrew.

Thou knewest where robins hid their nests,
And clambered fences like a boy,
Swung on the gates, and pelted frogs,
Pulled off the thatch from barn or house,
And shoved old Goody Graylocks down,
Turning her cloak quite o'er her head,
And umbrella inside out.

Thou loved'st to chase the lambs at play,
And scare the lapwing from her eggs:
Then would'st thou shake the tall tree tops,
And hurl from out their rocking nests
The unfledged rooklings to the ground.

A tall and slender pensive girl
Thou'rt now become; thy wildness gone,
Thy beauty bursting into bloom:
Mild, gentle, and unassuming,
Now thou dost weep and know'st not why,
And the next moment smilest again
Ere yet the tears have left thy cheek:

Bright laughter beams within thine eye—
The smile and tear alternate thine.
Oft have I met thee in my walks ;
Neat and becoming was thy dress ;
Thy skirt of green with bluebells strewn,
And on thy head sweet flowers
Wreathed round with leaves and opening buds.
Thou waked'st the bee from winter's sleep,
Bad'st the bright tulip stand erect,
And flung the wallflower's scent around.
I loved to stand upon the hill,
And see thy pleasing map unrolled ;
The beech cast off his winter cloak
To wear again his summer garb ;
The birch leaves tremble in the breeze,
And hoary oaks look young again.
How beautiful the larch thou decked'st !
Each graceful twig alternate hung
With little tassels, pink and green.
The wandering brook at distance seen,

Meandering mazy through the mead,
Looked like a silver riband thrown
On mantle green by careless hand.
Pleasant and comely wast thou then,
And grew in favour as thou older grew.
I well remember meeting thee
One morning going to gather may,
Arrayed in all thy youthful charms :
The blush of health was on thy cheek,
Thy breath perfume, bounding thy step,
And every motion graceful.
Thou strewed profuse the vale with flowers,
Dids't hang thy garlands on the trees ;
Embroidered nature's carpet gay ;
Dropt honey dews on shining leaves,
And spread thy tapestry o'er the hedge.
Thou cheered the mourner on his way ;
Didst lead the invalid abroad,
And playful child, in meadows gay,
Then listened to the milkmaid's song.

The artist loved thy smiling face,
Bade thee upon the canvass glow,
In ev'ry light new beauties traced
And almost worshipped whilst he gazed,
Thou cast'st thy spells around the bard,
Bewitching him to ecstasy,
When from the fountain of his heart
There bubbled up a sacred spring
That gushed in rapture from his eyes.
I have seen him wander by the wood,
While all day long the cuckoo sang
Unvarying and monotonous ;
Nor could he clothe his thoughts in words,
But fondly gazed, in silence loved.
Yes, well do I remember thee
Such time as flowery meads were mown ;
More sober and sedate didst look,
But not less lovely, though less gay :
Then wading barefoot through the brook,
And tossing hay with village swains,

Binding the roses round thy brow,
Seeking at noon some cooling shade,
And fanning thee with chestnut leaf.
The distant bleat of browsing sheep,
And lulling tinkling of their bells ;
The clear ring of the sharpening scythe,
With hum of insects in the air,
All joined to waft thee to repose.
When evening shed its dewy tears,
And nightingales poured forth their songs,
The moonbeams playing on thy face,
Thou lookd'st more lovely than by day.
Alas ! thy life is on the wane,
As now thou'st passed the hour of noon :
About the one o'clock of life
I marked thy shadow as it fell ;
It slowly to the east inclined.
Changed now thy mien, yet comely still ;
No more thou'rt sporting in the field,
Nor twinest the flowers in thy hair.

I saw thee pluck the broad green leaf,
And pile it high with berries,
Thy fingers wounded by the thorns
Which guard with jealous care the fruit ;
Thy baskets filled above the brim
With glossy currants, red and white ;
Thy lips with bleeding cherries stained.

And I have seen thy angry moods—
The scowling frown upon thy brow
Thick gathering black thy beauty marred ;
The lightning glancing from thine eyes
With stroke electric blasting fell ;
Thy muttering voice at distance heard,
Rumbled and rolled and rattled near :
Thy rage now spent in deafening peals,
Relief is found in floods of tears.

Thus passion spoils the fairest face,
And after tears may fall in vain.
The rose rent from its parent tree,
Or lilly severed from its stem,

Though sorrow follows when 'tis done,
No watering can make grow again.

I saw thee next among the sheaves,
With cheeks embrowned by the sun;
All day did'st pick the scattered ears,
And bore at eve the burden home,
Then shook down plums from laden boughs,
And filled the cups with foaming ale,
To welcome home the sons of toil.

Poppies full blown and larkspurs blue
Thou strewed'st upon the stubble field;
Built up the stack of bearded grain,
And crowned with boughs the horkey load;
For, like a thoughtful mother, thou
Wast provident of future wants.

The bloom now fading on thy cheek,
Less free and bounding were thy steps,
And here and there a silver hair
With wrinkle on thy forehead showed
That care had laid his hand on thee.

REMINISCENCES OF THE YEAR 1855.

Apples in their winter nests thou stored,
And lightened of its load the vine,
Filled full the bags with clustered nuts,
And whisked the acorn from its cup ;
Pelted the walnuts from the trees,
Which, as they rattled show'ring down,
Leaped clean from out their crumbling husks.
The grass yet wet with dew thou troddest,
And sought the spots where mushrooms grew
To cater for the tastes of man,
Who adds the rotten fungus juice
To flavour good and wholesome meat.

I stood upon the sunny hill,
And saw thee clad in gorgeous robes ;
Thy dress of green and amber mixt,
Turban of scarlet and of gold,
Rich wreathes of berries, coral red,
Entwined with others jetty black,
Thou wore around thy queealy brow :
Like a worn-out faded beauty,

Thou strove to hide the marks of time,
By decking out thy withered form
In gaudy trappings; gay and grand.
Yet there was sadness in thy look,
A melancholy pensiveness
That at thy age became thee well.

Thou seemed to mourn that early frost
Had nipped the dahlia's bloom—
That youth had passed so swift away,
And gloomy was the time to come.

So when the day draws near its close,
Though fair the morn and bright the noon,
It paints the west in richer hues,
Then weeps in silent dewy tears;
And then it fades and melts away,
And darkness draws her curtain round.

The wind swept o'er the dreary moor,
And rent to shreds thy faded robe,
Whose tatters fluttered o'er the earth,
Or sailed down the swollen stream.



The trees stretched wide their naked arms,
And slanting sunbeams straggled through,
Faint, pale, and sickly, casting down
Long shadowy network, mazy wove,
Which danced and flickered on the ground.

And thou! oh, thou wast altered then,
The spectre of thy former self!
Cold came the blast across the hills,
And whistled through the leafless hedge;
Then with thy fingers long and lean
Thou plucked the berries from the thorn:
All day thou wore a scowling face,
And moaned and muttered through the night.

The timid blade peeped from the earth,
And quailed beneath thy chilling breath,
When lonely bird-boy in his hut
Piled on his fire the sodden sticks,
Which smoked and filled his eyes with tears.
A jacket once his father wore
Was unto him a wrapping coat;

Below his knees the pockets reached :
Joyful would he his sister hail
Who brought to him his Sunday meal :
He'd show his toys and 'tend his fire
To tempt her longer stay with him.

Thou rais'dst upon the ponds and pool
A cream of thick, transparent ice,
To lure the urchins to their fall :
Then laid'st a flooring o'er the streams,
And where the barges glided once
The skaters swiftly skim along.

But now the ague cramps thy bones,
And palsies shake thy feeble limbs.

And soon, oh ! soon, thou'l^t pass away,
With all thy predecessors—gone !
Eternity shall be thy grave.

As tapers in the socket burn,
Before they sink in darkness quite,
Will brighten up into a blaze,
The prelude of their own decay.

So thou at merry Christmas smiled,
As if unmindly of thy end.
'Twas sad indeed to see thy mirth,
And know the number of thy days:
One week, one short and little week,
And thou wilt close thine eyes for aye.
Soon shall we hear thy funeral knell;
And ere its echoes die away,
Thy young successor shall be born.

Well! thou hast witnessed strange events,
And in thy annals much is writ
That some would blush to have revealed.
But I have loved thee through thy life:
I loved thy smiling infancy,
Thy maiden bloom and woman's grace,
Thy matron care and hoary age,
And I will watch thee to the last,
And gently press thine eyelids down,
And bless thee for the many friends
Thy passage hath produced me.

HE WOULD BE A SOLDIER.

" Mine ear is pained:
My soul is sick with every day's repast."

Young William was a widow's son,
Her loved, her cherished only one:
She'd watched and tended him with care,
With holy precept, ardent prayer;
Her life had neither blot nor slur,
And he was all the world to her.
He joined the birds in morning song,
And cheer'ly laboured all day long:
When evening came, released from toil,
He sat with Mary on the stile,
Where trees their lengthened shadows flung,—

Sweetly the sooty blackbird sung—
Or watched the sportive lambs at play;
He felt as free from care as they:
And when, their frugal supper o'er,
He'd train the woodbine round the door,
And fringe with daisies, white and red,
The little modest flower bed.
The briar hedge, so neat and trim,
Was clipt and kept in bounds by him;
And when the golden sun was set,
And dew upon the leaves was wet,
Or after gentle cooling rain,
When bright the sun gleamed out again,
And threw upon the passing cloud
The bow where all the colours crowd,
It scatter'd odour all abroad,
Across the fields and down the road.
The winter evenings, drear and long,
Were cheered with many a tale and song
Of goblin grim and fairy light,

That stalked or glided through the night,
That ne'er the youthful hearers tire
When round the blazing cheerful fire.
Year after year thus came and went,
And nothing marred their low content;
Till one day, going to the fair,
He met some gay companions there.
The day was spent in mirth and glee,
And all was merry as could be:
The soldiers quartered in the town
In proud array marched up and down;
The plume and helmet, drum and fife,
Showed the bright side of martial life.
He heard the wond'rous tales they told,
And saw the tempting yellow gold:
The sergeant cast his eye on him,
And praised his looks and strength of limb.
" 'Tis strange," said he, " a youth (just now)
Like you should mope behind the plough,
And drone the prime of life away

At home, for eighteen-pence a day.
Come, be a man, and serve the Queen,
And see the life that I have seen."

His mother in her lowly cot,
And Mary were awhile forgot:
So he was able, free, and willing,
And took the quickly offered shilling.
His bashful look he cast aside,
And round his hat the ribands tied;
And all that night and all next day
He squandered time and cash away:
His hard earned money madly went,
Till all the little stock was spent.
It would not do to let him think:
They plied and press'd him still to drink.
At last he on the settle sunk,
And fell asleep, completely drunk.
He slept until the breaking day
Streamed through the window where he lay:
Ashamed he rose and homeward sped,

With empty purse and aching head;
Through fields of smiling yellow corn,
By folded sheep with fleeces shorn,
In paths that led through meadows green
Where herds on either side were seen:
All things a happy aspect wore,
Like him, a day or two before.
"Fool, fool," he cried, then checked his tongue,
And as he passed the farm he sung;
But those he met could plainly see
He felt no inward melody.
Then down the village took his way,
His gaudy ribands streaming gay;
But when he reached the garden gate,
His happy quiet home of late,
He feared his mother to alarm,
And held his hat beneath his arm.
A vague report had reached her ears,
But now his well-known step she hears,
And fear and pain, and doubt and dread,

At his approach a moment fled.
But soon the colours met her view;
Her worst presages proved too true.
"What have you done?" she trembling cries,
While tears ran streaming from her eyes:
"You've filled my heart with deep distress,
And plucked up your own happiness."
"Mother," said he, "tis vain to grieve:
I've 'listed', and I soon must leave
This happy village, home, and you,
And to those fields must bid adieu:
But think not I shall you forget,
Or leave this place without regret.
A rustic's life to me's grown tame,
So I have now enrolled my name
Amongst that list of noble ones
Whom England proudly calls her sons.
Oh! mother, wipe those tears away:
The time is short I have to stay;
Talk not of buying my discharge,

"Twould take a sum by far too large
For poverty like ours to pay.
But you could find some help, you say.
I doubt it, mother; where's the friend
So free to give or even lend?
What's done, you know, we can't undo,
And I'm determined now to go:
So good by; you'll remember me
To Mary, whom I dare not see."

His weeping mother 'midst her tears
Oft blessed him, yet expressed her fears.
" Farewell, my son; and must we sever,
And shall we part and part for ever?
I tremble at the choice you've made,
And for your safety feel afraid:
Temptations will your path beset
More than at home you've ever met:
Your comrades, sprightly, young, and gay,
May lead your steps in folly's way;
And if your heart but yield to sin,

Many there are to lead you in.
Our lives are short, be where we will,
But soldiers' lives oft shorter still:
Disease of some unhealthy clime
May cut you off in early prime,
Or battle's fierce and bloody strife
May in a moment end your life.
That God may keep you in his care
Will be your mother's constant prayer.

“ Not for myself these tears I shed:
The God I trust has always fed,
And clothed, and sheltered me from ill,
And He will be my refuge still:
For all my wants did he provide,
Yes, even when your father died:
He gave me strength to struggle on,
To do my duty to my son;
For you I daily toiled and strove
With all a mother's fondest love.
Oh! the delight it was to me

To tend your smiling infancy;
To watch your childhood day by day,
And hear your merry laugh at play;
As months and years their courses ran,
To see you growing up to man;
To gaze upon your open face,
And there your father's likeness trace:
Just so he looked at your years:
I cannot now command my tears:
To part from you doth swell the flood,
I feel a second widowhood."

With heavy heart he turned aside
To shed the tears he could not hide.
"Good by," he said; "whate'er befall,
I'll write and let you know it all."

He reached the distant seaport town,
And tried in vain his care to drown;
He sought the noisy careless throng,
Joined in the laugh, the jest, and song:
Whate'er another dared to do

Or say, he dared to do it too.
He closed his eyes against the light;
His guardian angel took his flight;
Stifled the voice that spake within,
And plunged in every youthful sin.
The crafty lie, the daring oath,
He learned and well could use them both:
Nor would he at a danger flinch:
In short, a soldier every inch.
Once on a time; when all alone,
His credit and his money gone,
He thought upon his altered state,
And what might be his future fate.
At such a time the thoughts of home
Would o'er his hardened feelings come:
His long neglect he did repent,
And then the promised letter sent.
He bought a print—a soldier dress'd
In scarlet coat and padded breast,
With cap and plume and sash so grand,

And slender cane within his hand.
“The cheat,” said he, “will ne’er be known ;
I’ll tell my mother ’tis mine own.”

To all that passed she showed with joy
The likeness of her darling boy ;
Though no one else the features knew,
She would believe the likeness true.
And now the rumour of the war
Between the Sultan and the Czar
Spread over Europe with alarms,
And France and England flew to arms.
To shores renowned of old they press’d
To shield and succour the oppress’d,
And William went among the rest.
Oh ! who shall tell the frightful share
Of hardships that he suffered there—
The days of toil, the nights of pain,
From cold and hunger wind and rain !
Diseases rode upon the gale ;
The dead lay round him gaunt and pale ;

Each day he saw the yawning grave
Ingulf the young, the bold, and brave ;
And sighed to see those once so gay
Uncoffined mingle with the clay.
The barren hills around them frown ;
Before them lay the fenced town—
The town that they must win or die :—
A soldier's death or victory.

The day now dawned that was to close
O'er heaps of mingled slaughtered foes.
Loudly the booming cannons roared ;
The rifles thick their volleys poured ;
The burning shot and bursting shell
In pools of warm blood hissing fell.
Down came the towers with mighty crash,
As saplings rent by lightning's flash ;
And where the crumbling fragments fall,
The red gore splashed the heated wall ;
And shrieks and agonizing groans
Were heard beneath the crushing stones.

The wounded mingled with the slain
In every attitude of pain.
Beside the corpses, stark and grim,
Lay quiv'ring heart and maugled limb.
Less painful 'twas the dead to see,
Than those in writhing agony.
The dead—oh! they were blessed indeed,
To those who lived to feel and bleed,
And groan, and rave with burning thirst,
And grasp with clutching hands the dust,
And long and wish to pass away,
Like some who stiff beside them lay.
Some crawled a sheltered nook to find,
And left a train of blood behind,
Like to the track upon the green
That shows us where the snail has been.
But who is this with limping tread,
That stumbles o'er his comrades dead?
'Tis William, who, with heaving breath,
Left slowly now that field of death:

The clash of arms still smote his ears,
The whizzing bullets still he hears;
He sees a low deserted shed,
From which the inmates all have fled;
Panting he gains the open door,
And sinks exhausted on the floor:
He sinks, but will he not again
Awake to consciousness and pain?
Is life's long lingering conflict past,
And is that rending groan his last?
Oh no! once more he opes his eyes,
Again in vain he tries to rise;
His stiff'ning limbs, now weak and sore,
Congealing blood has crusted o'er;
His arm of strength, so late his pride,
Now useless dangled by his side;
And no one near his wounds to dress:
He faints in utter helplessness.
Before his dim and failing sight
Appears a vision of the fight,

He sees his comrades hacked and hewn,
He sees the ground with dead bestrewn;
And now his busy anxious thought
His distant home before him brought:
He sees the peaceful cottage door
And threshold he shall pass no more—
The rose that by the window grew,
The thyme, the hoarhound, sage, and rue,
With all his mother's favourite flowers,
That smiled in sunshine, wept in showers;
The heavy laden orchard trees,
The hives of humming swarming bees:
He sees his mother's tearful eye,
As when she bade him last good-by,
Like fountains overflow the brim,
And hears her offer prayers for him.
He seems the holy words to hear
That morn and night fell on his ear—
The prayer that from affection springs,
From love that to the first-born clings,

That time nor absence can destroy—
“God of my hope, preserve my boy.”
He sees again the winding stream
In sunlight of the morning gleam ;
He sees the hills and valleys smile,
Also the rustic bridge and stile ;
The quiet humble house of God,
Where sleep beneath the grassy sod
The homely sons of honest toil :
The patient tillers of the soil.
A peaceful resting-place had found,
In graves with clasping briars bound.
“And I,” he cries, in deep despair,
“Forbid at last to slumber there.”
A softness o'er his feelings crept,
And, like a child, the strong man wept ;
Long hoarded tears and pent up sighs
Broke from his heart, gushed from his eyes :
The anguish that his manly pride
From ev'ry eye had sought to hide

Flowed free and unrestrained alone,
And melted down the heart of stone.
He shrunk not in the battle's strife,
But boldly ventured limb and life;
No cowardice, nor craven fear,
Deterred him from his duty there;
So valiantly that day he stood
Amidst the carnage, death, and blood,
Nor yielded till his failing strength
Ebb'd out in bleeding wounds at length.
His sighs to other days were given—
His tears were incense sent to heaven.
Where are his early dreams of fame—
The honours that should gild his name?
Faded and sere the laurel wreath—
His bright career to end in death!
Once he had hopes (but now they're past)
To see again his home at last,
To cheer his mother's latter days,
And sing again the rustic lays:

And fancy often painted fair
A trusting girl with flowing hair,
The object of his early love,
Mild, soft, and gentle as the dove.
“ Why did I ever from them part?”
Fell like a weight upon his heart.
“ Oh, had I clung to rural life,
With such a mother, such a wife!
Why did I leave those friends so dear,
To die alone and wretched here?
My mother, you are spared the pain
Of knowing me among the slain;
Yet hope’s pale lamp doth dimly burn,
And still she trusts I may return:
And Mary too will hope and wait,
But who will tell my hapless fate?
I see her now with straining eye
Each morning watch the postman by.
Ah! never more this hand shall write,
Nor line from me e’er meet her sight.

I feel I'm sinking fast away—
O God, my Father, hear me pray:—
In health I saw no dangers nigh,
And passed thy word of counsel by;
I played and danced, I drank and sung,
Yet all the while my heart was wrung:
The voice that sought my infant years
Seems often whispering in my ears;
The words I never quite forgot—
‘Thy father’s God forsake thou not’—
I have neglected for a time,
And drained the cup that led to crime.
I madly sought the praise of men,
And thought myself a hero then.
Ah! what avail their praises now?
The damp of death is on my brow;
Short is the time I have to live,
Oh! bless me, Father, and forgive.”
The heaving breath and pulses low
Show life is yielding to the foe:

A trembling seized the outstretched limb ;
The fixed eyeballs waxed dim ;
That long, low hollow groan, the last,
And with that sigh the spirit passed :
The silver chord is broke in twain,
That heart will never beat again ;
Grim death has hunted down his prey,
And stamped his signet on the clay.

THE FOSTER BROTHER.

They bade me love him when a child,
And call him little brother :
He was my only playmate then,
Nor wished I for another.
I was not jealous of the love
He from my parents drew ;
My share I could have given him,
So beautiful he grew.

We had a grassy orchard, where
We used to run and play,
When the sun was shining brightly,
And the appletree was gay.

One little nook we called our house,
With platters garnished round ;
There the lilacs and laburnums
We in our tresses bound.

We rose together in the morn,
Together went to sleep ;
And, if either had a sorrow,
The other one would weep.
One day when plucking flowers, he
Was wounded by a bee ;
When I saw his swollen finger,
'Twas pain as great to me.

Together o'er the daisied green
We tripped away to school ;
Our lessons learned from the same book,
And sat on the same stool.

And when at noon or evening
The leisure hour had come,
He then my little champion was,
And guarded me safe home.

Upon the winding shallow brook
We watched the moor-fowl float;
And there on Summer holidays
We swam our little boat.
I loved to see the tiny waves
O'er shining pebbles play,
And knew not then my happiness,
Like them, would pass away.

I sighed not for a richer home,
Nor yet to dress more fine;
I felt no envy that his clothes
More costly were than mine.

Oh no, I felt a glowing pride,
A fondness for that boy ;
I could have borne his share of grief,
And given him my joy.

My mother often told us that
We soon should have to part ;
And when at last the summons came,
I knew it pained his heart.
He cared not for the splendour of
His father's festive halls,
But would have been content to stay
Within our humble walls.

He left, and I felt lone and sad,
And missed him everywhere :
I sighed to see his books and toys,
His vacant bed and chair.

There was a blank within the house,
So desolate and chill,
And in my lonely heart a void
That none but he could fill.

I sauntered through the flowery fields
And by the brawling brook,
The garden and the orchard green,
And to our favourite nook.
The lilac was as beautiful,
As gay the apple-tree;
The bright laburnums were the same,
But all seemed changed to me.

Thus years rolled on, and now and then
A welcome letter came :
He called me still his sister dear,
And loved me still the same.

Oh, had I been his sister ! but
 'Tis useless to regret :
Or had I been his equal born,
 Or had we never met !

Oh ! there are springs of pure delight
 That we in childhood taste,
To which the yearning heart looks back
 O'er life's wide dreary waste :
Whilst when in the world's desert parched
 No waters meet our view,
But the false mirage lures us on,
 And flies as we pursue.

'Twas on a summer's evening,
 I sat beneath a tree—
A gentle voice pronounced my name ;
 I turned, and oh ! 'twas he.

I could not speak—I could not weep:
A whirling seized my brain;
I fell into his open arms,
And was a child again.

My mind had always pictured him
As when I saw him last—
Forgetful how myself had grown,
And seven years had passed.
His voice had now a deeper tone;
His smile I thought more sweet,
For he had reached that age in life,
Where youth and manhood meet.

One week he staid—one little week,
And then he bade adieu;
And I—I felt more wretchedness
Than 'e'er before I knew.

At wisdom's fount by Cam's clear stream
He sought his mind to fill,
And wealth and learning made the gap
Between us wider still.

'Tis true that I with pleasure heard
Of his scholastic fame,
And glowed to know that worth had thrown
A halo round his name.
And then again my heart would ache
With keen prophetic woe :
I had no hope that he so high
Would stoop to one so low.

The callow eagle with the dove
Awhile may be a guest,
But when its full-plumed wings are grown,
'Twill scorn her humble nest,

And rise and soar far, far away
Beyond her narrow flight,
And seek a mate amongst his own,
Within the sun's broad light.

And so, alas ! it was with him ;
For soon the tale was spread,
That he unto the altar had
A high-born maiden led.
They told me she was beautiful ;
They praised her charms around,
And sought with keen sarcastic words
My spirit more to wound.

I tried to call my reason's aid
To cheerfully resign
The phantom I had long pursued,
Which never could be mine.

I could not free me from the chain,
Nor break the witching spell ;
And then I knew that I had loved,
" Not wisely, but too well."

It was a gleam of morning sun—
I knew it could not last—
Ere my young day had reached its noon,
My sky was overcast.
I saw how baseless was the hope
On which I'd dared to trust ;
And now my air-built fabrie
All crumbled into dust.

My hand was sought by more than one
Young ardent village swain ;
But I could not the past forget,
Although it gave me pain.

My heart his one impression bore,
Nor could their warmest zeal
E'er soften it or melt it down
To take another seal.

Ask me not why I loved him so,
When he to me was cold :
Love is a little wayward god,
That will not be controlled.
We grew and twined together, like
Two flowers when they're small,
Of which, if rudely parted,
The weaker one must fall.

I've struggled on as best I could
Beneath my heavy load,
And learned to love the trees and flowers
Around my low abode.

I sometimes take my lonely walk
Beside yon little stream,
And call dim misty shadows back,
And dream a waking dream.

I envied not his happier lot—
'Twas sinful if I did:
He never knew the love for him
That in my heart I hid;
But always calls me sister still,
And then my grief I smother ;
He little knows the pain it is
For me to call him brother.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

The darkness had rolled to the west away
Before the approach of the rising day :
The laggard stars, with lessening light,
Gave up their watch to an orb more bright :
The worn-out moon, like a silver bow,
In the western sky was sinking slow :
From behind his gorgeous curtains red
The sun uprose from his eastern bed ;
He first on the brow of the mountain played,
Then down in the glens and the valleys strayed ;

He chased away the gloom of the woods,
And burnished with gold the winding floods ;
The teardrops that stood in each flowret's eye
He turned to pearls, and kissed them dry.

It was a morning such as this,
When Abraham left his tent,
And unto the distant mountain
His heavy steps he bent,
With downcast eye and aching heart—
His faith severely tried ;
While Isaac, full of life and hope,
Went bounding by his side ;
As happy as the playful fawn,
As full of mirth and glee,
He plucked the blushing flowers, or
Chased the humble bee.
He wondered that his father
Partook not of his mirth,



But walked along with downcast eyes
Still fixed upon the earth.
All nature was so beautiful,
Why should his father sigh?
Then lovingly he took his hand,
And asked the reason why.
"There's sorrow, father, in thy heart,
There's sadness in thy brow:
I have seen thee suffer anguish,
But never such as now.
Oh! how well do I remember
Thy heaviness that day,
When he thou lovedst next to me,
Young Ishmael, went away.
I saw that he (I knew not why)
Was hated by my mother;
But if he'd faults I knew them not,
I loved him as a brother.
Is it of Ishmael now thou thinkest,
And does it give thee pain?

Let us seek for him and Hagar,
And bring them back again.
Thou tremblest now, my father dear ;
A tear falls from thine eye ;
Some one hath deeply saddened thee ;
Oh, tell me is it I ?
Look on me as thou used to look,
And let me see thee smile ;
Come, tell me tales of what thou sawest
Upon the banks of Nile ;
And of the guilty city's doom,
Never to be forgot,
For whom thy prayers could not avail,
And of our kinsman Lot.
Tell me thy early history,
When thou, at God's command,
Left thy country, home, and people,
And journeyed to this land.
Come, speak to me, my father dear,
Call me again thy son ;

Tell me of angels and of God,
As often thou hast done.
Think of the gracious promise
Jehovah made to thee,
And of the countless multitudes
That are to spring from me.
How highly are we favoured
Above the people round!
For God has blessed our substance—
Our flocks and herds abound.
We bow not down to idols, like
The abject sons of Ham,
But worship Him who made the world,
The glorious I Am.
Thou show'dst me from the hill-top once
A distant, gloomy wood,
And told'st me in its darkest shade
A heathen temple stood;
And, also, that the altar was
Stained with human gore,

And that cruel were the tortures
The bleeding victims bore.
Oh, is it not a fearful thing
Their horrid rites require—
That children to this Moloch grim
Be cast into the fire?
I shudder when I think of them,
And often in my dreams
Have seen the helpless innocents,
And heard their piercing screams.
When will the light that beams on us
On all the world arise?
The God we're going to worship
Asks no such sacrifice."

" Come to thy father's arms, my boy,
And lay thy cheek to mine;
How beautiful that artless trust,
That simple faith of thine !

Theu dost not know the weight of grief
That bids these tears to start—
That all thou'st said to cheer me falls
Like lead upon my heart.
The God we go to worship now
Is holy, just, and good;
But I've a duty to perform
That's hard for flesh and blood.
The dark decrees of Providence
Are hidden from my sight;
Yet shall the Judge of all the earth
Do only what is right.
Let's rest awhile: this spreading tree
Will give a cooling shade;
Here take thy meal, and bid the men
The weary ass unlade:
And I will at a distance sit,
And if thou hearest me groan,
Disturb me not, nor question me,
But let me be alone."

“Through all my life, great God, I’ve found
Thee faithful to thy word;
And can I doubt thy wisdom now,
When thou hast never erred?
Yet, oh! those words—‘Take now thy son,
Isaac, whom thou dost love,
To offer as a sacrifice,
Thy stedfast faith to prove!’
If nature groans beneath the load,
So heavy on it laid—
If fond affection suffers much,
Thy word shall be obeyed.
Forgive me, O thou Holy One,
Who am but of the dust,
That now I dare to plead with thee,
The righteous and the just.
This child beloved, this gift from thee,
If he must die indeed,
Where is the blessing to the world?—
Where is the promised seed?

I know that nothing is too hard,
Almighty God, for thee,
And all is open to thy sight
That's darkly hid from me ;
For thine almighty power is such,
That thou canst raise him up :
Yet heavy is the blow to me,
And bitter is the cup.
'Tis nature only that thus pleads—
The father for the son ;
My spirit bows to thy decree,
And says, 'Thy will be done.' "

Heb. xi. 19.

JEPHTHAH TO HIS DAUGHTER.

JUDGES XI.

My daughter! my daughter! oh, sad was the hour,
When I opened my mouth to the Lord in a vow.
What to me is the glory of conquest and power,
Or the wreath of the victor that circles my brow?

Though safe I return from the red field of slaughter,
Whereon the proud children of Ammon now lie,
What is it to me whilst thou, my loved daughter,
Art doomed by the oath of thy father to die?

Yes, I vowed to the Lord that if he would bless me,
Whatsoever first met me an offering should be ;
Well might I have known thou would'st fly to caress me :
Reproach me, my child ; I deserve it from thee.

The trumpet proclaimed me as homeward advancing—
The elders of Israel to welcome me met—
But thou wast the foremost, with timbrels and dancing :
Oh, could I that greeting for ever forget !

So guileless and happy, thine eyes brightly shining,
The helmet did'st chide for opposing thy kiss ;
Round the war-stained corslet thy arms fondly twining :
My heart bleeds the more for affection like this.

And must thou thus perish, my opening blossom—
My only one—fond one ? My heart's on the rack :
To save thee I'd pour out the life of this bosom ;
But “ I've opened my mouth, and I cannot go back.”

Oh ! why did I leave thee, my own peaceful dwelling,
Entreated by those who had spurned me before ?
The hope of renown my proud spirit was swelling,
But the victory gained, I must ever deplore.

Scorned, branded, thrust out as the son of a stranger,
An alien from country and frowned on by fame ;
Yet, cringing, they sought me again in their danger,
And, won by their fawning, to aid them I came.

How hateful to me are the plandits that greet me ?
Can they calm the wild tempests within me which rave ?
No more on my desolate hearth shall I meet thee ;
A childless old man shall I sink to the grave.

More dear to my soul than the gush of the fountain
To pilgrims that travel the fierce torrid zone,
Go, bewail thy hard fate for awhile on the mountain,
And leave me to wrestle with anguish alone.

A victim unsullied to Heaven I've given,
And Gilead's maidens will weep o'er thy tomb ;
But who will bind up the heart that is riven,
Or lighten again the dark night of my gloom ?

I dare not reflect—there is madness in thinking;
My heartstrings are rending, and dizzy my brain ;
Whilst thou at the ordeal art standing unshrinking—
O God of my fathers, my weakness sustain.

C H A N G E S.

1 PET, 1 24, 25.

Changing, changing—all is changing
In this weary world of woe:
Fleeting, vain, and unsubstantial
Is everything below.
Each day—each hour of fancied bliss,
With pain and care is rife;
Such mingled colours make up this
Kaleidescope of life.

Close to the joy of meeting comes
That saddening word, farewell ;
In pauses of the song is heard
The tolling of a knell :
The captive's moan and shout of kings
On the same breezes steal ;
And groan, and sigh, and laughter rings
Life's ever-changing peal.

I see the change on tree and flower
Within my daily walk—
The bud, the blossom, next the fruit,
And then the withered stalk.
The clouds that shroud the dying day
Are charged with scowling storms ;
Yet, whilst I gaze, they melt away
In other tints and forms.

Where are the days of boyhood fled,
With those whom then I knew,
Who played upon the village green—
A merry, laughing crew?
Some scattered far in other climes
Beyond the ocean's wave;
Some left to talk of by-gone times,
And many in the grave.

The dimples from the cheeks are gone,
The limbs have lost their play,
The flowing locks are growing thin,
And sprinkled o'er with gray:
Across the fair and open brow
Are drawn the lines of care,
For time and change's ruthless plough
Have left their furrows there.

The changing seasons roll around
With varied heat and cold,
And man gives np his place to man,
As in the days of old.
Sun, moon, and stars shall pass away,
The rocks and mountains burn,
But God alone no change can know,
Nor shadow of a turn.

RETROSPECTION.

Of joys departed
Never to return.

Blair.

I would I were a child again,
With just that simple, artless mind—
A heart as free from guile and stain
As I with youth have left behind.
Ah ! vain the wish—that time is o'er;
Those happy days return no more.

How much in life has lost its charm
Since I with it familiar grew !
How oft my fancy, fresh and warm,
Has painted joys I never knew !
How have I been by Hope deceived,
And then again the cheat believed !

In happy childhood's Eden placed,
Unknown the world's cold-heartedness,
We soon the tree of knowledge taste,
To see our shame and nakedness :
The wisdom thus so eager sought
With loss of innocence is bought.

“Whom the Gods love do early die,”
And leave this scene of noise and strife—
Just taste the cup, then pass it by,
Nor stay to drain the dregs of life ;
And, as the dove sought rest in vain,
Return they to the ark again.

Yes, happier is the rose distilled,
Than with'ring on the virgin thorn,
By slow consuming cankers killed,
Than left a prey to slight and scorn :
Its fragrant sighs it breathes around,
Then falls unheeded on the ground.

I've seen the pure and spotless snow
Dissolve as falling in the stream—
Seen but a moment here below,
As transient as a meteor's gleam,
And soiling not its heavenly birth
By taking any stains from earth.

And I have seen it lingering lay
On lonely bank or thronged street,
Defiled by filthy mud and clay,
And trodden down by passing feet,
Till scarce a vestige could I see
Of all its native purity.

Oh ! life is but a jarring string
That trembles on a broken lyre ;
Or, like a bird with shattered wing,
Its shining plumage stained with mire,
It scorns the earth, yet cannot rise,
Or seek again its native skies.

How doth the burthened soul aspire,
And pant and struggle after rest;
And, like a smouldering hidden fire,
By weight of dust and ashes prest,
It longs to burst into a flame,
To find the source from whence it came!

To shiver on a winter's day,
Remembering what the summer's been;
To see around me fading lay
The leaves that once were fresh and green:
Oh! who would wish to linger here,
To feel his heart grow cold and sear?

Dark, heavy clouds, with brooding wings,
Their shadows o'er the future cast,
And thought, that, like the ivy, clings
Around the ruins of the past,
And on the mouldering fabric feeds—
The sad abode of owls and weeds.

To groan beneath the present woe,
By fierce contending passions tost,
Contrasting what my fate is now
With that sweet peace for ever lost—
'Tis like the curse to demons given,
Who can't forget their former heaven.

INSENSIBILITY TO DEATH
AROUND US.

One day I sat in pensive mood
Beside a gently flowing stream,
That wandered through a shady wood,
Whose murmurs soothed my waking dream :
O'er the green leaves the zephyr played—
A fragrant, cooling, wanton breeze—
And lulling sounds of music made
Among the softly whispering trees.

Along the grassy margin grew
Those plants which love a shady spot ;
With eyes of softest, palest blue,
Hung weeping the forget-me-not,
Still bending down with modest head,
And gazing in the glassy wave—
That source from whence its life is fed,
And soon, alas ! to be its grave.

I watched upon a willow tall
A trembling leaf hang o'er my head ;
At last I saw it silent fall,
And float upon the watery bed.
“Gone—gone!” I cried, “in summer's bloom,
Whilst all around is fresh and gay :”
Like youth that finds an early tomb,
I saw it slowly pass away.

I gathered many a shining stone,
Which scattered lay within the wood,
Then tossed them from me one by one,
And saw them sink into the flood:
A bubble rose, a circle spread,
Enlarging faintly near the shore,
Soon every trace of them had fled—
The waters glided as before.

And thus we see our neighbours die,
And only feel a moment's pain;
We watch the sad procession by,
Then turn to our pursuits again:
Insensible as heedless waves
That sweep away the flow'rets' bloom,
We dance in sight of open graves,
And sport with toys around the tomb.

Thus has it been for ages past,
And so 'twill be when I am gone ;
The world will hurry on as fast, ·
Like water o'er the sunken stone.
When I return to parent earth,
And mingle with forgotten clay,
It will not cheek a moment's mirth,
Nor scarce be known a mile away.

A SUMMER EVENING REVERIE.

Welcome the cool and silent hour
Which links together night and day ;
When meditations holy power
Can steal the thoughts from earth away.

The sun has set, and left behind
His robe of crimson in the west,
All edg'd with gold, with silver lined,
As if the god had there undress'd.

The droning beetles wheel about,
The briar sweet perfumes the gale ;
And, one by one, the stars come out
And listen to the nightingale.

That liquid flow of dying notes—
That gush from yonder leafy knoll—
How soothing to the ear it floats,
And falls like balm upon the soul !

Too sad for joy—too sweet for grief—
A pensiveness with gladness joined ;
It gives the burden'd heart relief,
And stills the tumult of the mind.

'Tis like the melancholy mirth
To hopeful mourners kindly given,
Who mingle with the sighs of earth
The harmonies that breathe of heaven.

The lovely flow'rets in their beds,
Rocked by the zephyr's gentle sigh,
Have closed their eyes and bowed their heads,
And birds have sung their lullaby.

The wide horizon's distant bound
Is dimly fading from the sight;
The noiseless bats are flitting round,
As deeper grow the shades of night.

All things combine to fill the soul
With holy thoughts of trust and love;
And tell that He who rules the whole
Is near, though still so far above.

Come, sober Night, with sable wings;
Brood o'er this wayward heart of mine;
Hush every thought of earthly things,
And quicken me in joys divine.

Of all the wonders of thy hand,
Great God, how small a part I see!
Yet these, by perfect wisdom planned,
Proclaim thy glorious Deity.

Yes, great and glorious must He be,
Who gave those radiant orbs their birth,
And strewed such rich variety
Of beauteous flow'rets o'er the earth.

He made the grain that crowns yon field,
The leaves that tremble in the breeze;
He bade the thorn its fragrance yield,
And hung the blossoms on the trees.

Above—around—in every place,
Where thought of man has never been—
Through all the boundless realms of space,
Alike his power and love are seen.

Ye stars that gem the vaulted skies,
And nightly thus your vigils keep;
Are ye the ever wakeful eyes
That watch and guard us while we sleep?

Or are ye worlds of love and light,
Where happy spirits find a home ;
Which sin and sorrow cannot blight,
Where pain and death can never come ?—

Perhaps the mansions long prepared—
The sweet remaining promised rest—
Where virtue finds its full reward,
With God's eternal favour blest ?

May not the bard who sung of ye,
Great Milton, dwell within your beams,
And find your glorious spheres to be
Beyond his most exalted dreams ?

The veil of blindness rent away—
No more a darkling bird he sings ;
A spirit free, unclogg'd by clay,
More sweetly strikes the magic strings.

Whilst sailing over life's rough sea,
By billows tossed—by tempests driven ;
To guide us to the port, are ye
The signal lights hung out from heaven ?

Nearing the millstream, bright and cool,
Where willows gray their branches bathe,
I see, reflected in the pool,
Another glorious heaven beneath.

How placidly the waters rest—
A glass where stars unnumbered shine,
Which, like the humble, pious breast,
Reflects again the light divine !

Oh ! who in Fashion's tinselled bowers
Or gay saloons would seek for bliss,
When songs and incense, stars and flowers,
Surround him on a night like this ?

P R O G R E S S I O N.

Oh, cease to think of days gone by:
The past is dead—then let it rest:
The misty glass of memory,
Shows dimly what we once possessed.
The joys and sorrows we have known,
Alike are buried in the tomb;
The present moment is our own,
Nor can we pierce the future's gloom

Then be not like the graven bust
Upon the silent monument;
For ever bending o'er the dust,
Returned to its own element.

To lift our heart's affections higher—
To bid our grovelling spirits rise—
See, yonder tall and slender spire
Is pointing upwards to the skies.

There's much remaining to be done,
And time is speeding on its flight;
A battle's to be lost or won—
Then let's be valiant in the fight;
A race that we must strive to win—
Then press toward the mark in view;
A war to wage with inbred sin,
And evil passions to subdue.

'Tis not enough that we stand still,
To watch the struggling cares of life;
'Tis vain to think we do no ill
By being neutral in the strife.

Life should not be a stagnant pool,
Sluggish and muddy in repose;
But living water, fresh and cool,
That fertilizes as it flows.

How like a dream the past appears,
Far down the dim extended track!
Why should the shades of bygone years
Beckon the onward spirit back?
The moth that floats on downy wings
Was once an abject worm of earth;
Exulting, upward now it springs,
Forgetful of its meaner birth.

In days of sportive boyhood wild,
Trifles and toys we must allow;
But things that pleased me when a child,
No longer ought to charm me now.

I would not be a stunted dwarf,
Scarce reaching higher than a span;
But childish playthings learn to scoff,
And reach the stature of a man.

All that we loved or feared the most—
The dreams of evil as of good,
Of yesterday, as much are lost,
As are the days beyond the flood.
If only in this life we'd hope,
How gloomy would our prospect be?
But Faith presents her telescope,
And shows a bright eternity.

THE CYPRESS TREE.

The buttercup bright and the daisy wild
May be twined in a wreath for the thoughtless child ;
No sombre flower should shade the brow,
Whose days should speak only of gladness now.
Simple the wreaths that children should wear,
And bright as the locks of their sunny hair.
Let them play in the meadows, and dance and sing,
And deck themselves out in the blossoms of spring.
Oh ! tell them not sorrow awaits them here ;
Oh ! mar not their pleasures nor cause them a tear :
Spring flowers for childhood, but as for me,
My wreath shall be formed of the cypress tree.

Bring white and red roses a garland to braid,
To twine in the hair of the young blushing maid;
Pluck them early at morn, when wet with the dew,
Yet the thorns must be with them as with them they grew.
Then tell her that beauty's a fatal dower,
And remember the rose is a fast-fading flower.
The bud may look fair, but as soon as full blown,
It withers and fades, and its graces are gone;
When its bloom is all scattered the thorns will remain,
And love is a mixture of pleasure and pain.
Yet the garland for youth of fresh roses must be,
But mine shall be plucked from the cypress tree.

The white orange blossom the bride shall adorn,
And jessamine stars in her tresses be worn;
She's leaving the friends who have screened her from ill,
But she leans on the arm of a dearer one still;
The name that she's called by sounds strange on her ear—
Yet, proud that she bears it, she smiles through a tear;

He has promised to love her in weal and in woe,
And his home will be hers now wherever they go.
Let adversity frown or reproach blight his name,
Tho' the whole world forsake him she'll love him the same ;
For affection so pure a white garland should be,
But mine I would call from the cypress tree.

Let us gather green laurels, and place on the head
Of the hero so brave, who for freedom has bled ;
The bold and undaunted, who fought for the cause
Of his Country and Commerce, Religion and Laws.
How noble the man who ne'er gives offence,
And draws not the sword but in Freedom's defence !
The tyrant and despot may gain him a name,
But oppression shall tarnish and blacken his fame ;
The prayers of a nation shall follow the brave,
And tears of affection shall hallow his grave :
The laurel, O warrior ! shall wave over thee,
But I would lie down with the cypress tree.

The evergreen bay for the child of songs—
Apollo's own tree to the poet belongs;
The stars which come out in the twilight so dim,
And the moon and sun have a language for him;
The winds whisper music—the deep has a voice—
The woods and the valleys all bid him rejoice;
Not a flower ever nestles among the tall grass—
Not a shadow that falls from the clouds as they pass—
Nor the trembling leaves, but with him they confer,
For he is great Nature's interpreter:
A crown of green bay for the poet shall be,
But shade me with boughs from the cypress tree.

Yes, I would lie down, in the evening's gloom,
By the tree which o'ershadows the mouldering tomb;
Where the long branches weep o'er the gray leaning stones,
And the roots crawl beneath among coffins and bones.
Here lone Melancholy her picture might draw,
And revel amidst her creations of awe;

More welcome to me than the torch's bright glare—
Let the thoughtless, and young, and lighthearted go there :
Oh ! what should I do with the merry and gay ?
When my spirits are sad I am better away :
No laurels, nor myrtles, nor roses for me,
But the dark, mournful boughs of the cypress tree.

Gone—gone is the time of my innocent play,
The days of my youth I have squandered away ;
My life creeps along like a dull, sluggish stream,
And I mope through the world like one in a dream ;
I have wandered at night in the moonlight alone,
When the wind through the trees would plaintively moan ;
The owl is more welcome to me than the lark—
I cling to the past, for the future is dark ;
I love the gray ruins and wrecks of old times,
And have woven my thoughts into jingling rhymes :
There's but one place of rest in the wide world for me,
Where the weary ones sleep 'neath the cypress tree.

THOUGHTS IN AUTUMN.

Morning suns are overcast,
Summer's roses quickly fade;
Days of youth are fleeting fast,
Friends in silent dust are laid;
Clouds will veil the placid moon,
Transient are the rainbow's hues;
All that's fair will wither soon,
And pass away as morning dews.

Sparkling eyes are waxing dim,
Ruddy cheeks will hollow grow,
Weak and stiff the supple limb,
Locks of jet be white as snow;

Shrill the voice that once could shout,
Now a childish treble whine;
Memory's page is blotted out,
Or only here and there a line,

Early buds of smiling Spring
Are lost and never can be found;
Summer's birds have taken wing,
Autumn's leaves bestrew the ground;
Short the day and long the night
Tell the time is drawing near,
When Winter's winding-sheet of white
Shall wrap around the worn-out year.

Let the leaves bestrew the plain,
And naked leave the shivering trees;
They shall all be clothed again,
And wave their fans in Summer's breeze.

Be their loss no more deplored,
Let the fragile blossoms die,
These again shall be restored—
Emblems of immortality.

Oh no! the grave doth not take all,
When drops the weary body down;
What's hid beneath the shroud and pall
The earth may justly claim her own.
I would not here take up my rest,
Nor wish this world my lasting home;
The soul, by sin and sorrow pressed,
Pants for a purer world to come.

A world of bliss beyond the stars,
Where happy holy spirits rove,
Far—far removed from earthly jars,
And all is rest, and peace, and love;—

A world above our reason's reach,
That shall as long as God endure;—
A world that Jesus lived to teach,
And died and rose to make secure.

DECEMBER'S DAISY.

Welcome, thou little slighted one,
So unexpected here ;
Now, all the gaudier flowers are gone,
To me thou'rt doubly dear.

Though summer's days are at an end,
And rude the winter's blast,
Thou, like a faithful, loving friend,
Art constant to the last.

The same kind face thou show'st as when
The sky was all serene ;
Thine eye is now as bright as then—
Thy leaf is still as green.

The winter's frowns depress thee not,
Nor summer's smiles elate;
Contented with thy humble lot—
Unchanged by any fate.

Shame to myself, I've passed thee by,
A gayer flower to seek;
Nor heeded then thine upturn'd eye,
So patient and so meek.

The violets' fragrance fill'd the air,
But soon they pass'd away;
The roses faded, though so fair;
And lillies, where are they?

The tulips, in their splendid dyes
Of gold and purple hue,
Companions of the butterflies,
Have perish'd with them too.



But thou, of lowly, slender form,
And white and starlike rays,
Cans't look to heaven through the storm,
And smile on darkest days.

"Go, mark the lillies how they grow,"
The greatest Teacher said ;
And thou a lesson, too, I know,
Wast meant for me to read.

My little, silent monitor,
To thee the power is given,
When gloomy clouds around me lower,
To bid me look to Heaven.

THE WILD PRIMROSE.

Pale, consumptive looking flower,
With tearful eye,
Hiding in thy lonely bower,
Soon to die.
Cold and wan thy pallid cheek:
Soon thou'l be laid in the dust,
Yet thou smilest, resigned and meek,
My pet lamb of the shade.

In thy calm and gentle face,
 And sickly breath,
Dreamy fancy knows to trace
 Marks of death.
Flower of the moonlight hue,
 Seen perhaps by me alone,
I'll remember where thou grew,
 And mourn thee when thou'ret gone.

Ere the blossom decks the thorn
 Over thy head;
Ere the wild white rose is born,
 Thou'l be dead.
Humble child of early Spring,
 Soon, alas! to pass away:
How the heart's affections cling
 To things of shortest stay!

In shady woods thou lovest to dwell,
Nor court'st the sun ;
Secluded in some lonely dell—
A cloistered nun ;
Duly in the morning's light,
Matins from thy cell arise ;
And on the fragrant breath of night,
Thy vespers reach the skies.

Lovely daughter of the Spring,
Simplicity,
Plaintive nightingales shall sing
A dirge for thee ;
Trees that overarch thy head
Shall drop for thee the dewy tear ;
And woodbine's sweetest scents be shed,
Upon thy lowly bier.

SONG TO THE VIOLET.

Come, lovely blue violet, and open your eyes;
The blackbird is singing his song;
The lark too is mounting up high in the skies;
Come, awake! I have sought for you long.
The snowdrop came out while the wind from the north,
Bleakly blew on her unsheltered head;
The timid primrose has at last ventured forth,
And you still asleep in your bed.

The banks are all studded with buttercups yellow,
The arum begins to unfold;
The bees, too, are humming around the palm willow,
All laden, with bosses of gold.



Come, awake! come, awake! for the butterfly o'er you
Is waving her gossamer wing;
The lady-bird silently waits to adore you,
My beautiful blossom of Spring.

The snow is all melted—there's nothing to harm you;
The mild gentle Spring's coming on;
The bright sun is beaming unclouded to warm you,
And dreary cold winter is gone.
Come forth from your shelter—no longer be staying,
And hiding your green leaves beneath;
Awake, for the zephyrs around you are playing,
To catch the perfume of your breath.

SONG OF THE BUTTERFLY.

I come from bowers of lilacs gay,
With honeysuckles blending ;
And many a spray of willows gray,
Above the waters bending.

I flutter by the river side,
Where laves the swan his bosom ;
And o'er the open common wide,
Where yellow ragworts blossom.

Away on downy pinions borne,
With many a happy rover,
I skim above the rustling corn,
And revel in the clover.

I laugh to see the frugal bee,
For others hoard her treasure ;
From morn till night a toiler she,
But mine's a life of pleasure.

I gem my head with pollen dust,
From out the waxen lillies ;
And in the stream my plume adjust,
Swinging on daffodillies.

I drink the sweets the violet yields,
On banks of emerald mosses ;
Then flaunt away to trefoil fields,
Hung thick with golden bosses.

I banquet on the hawthorn's breath,
Where lady-birds assemble ;
And dance upon the open heath,
Where fairy bluebells tremble.

No care—no thought of future want,
My present pleasure spoiling ;
Unlike the ever plodding ant,
For dreary winter toiling.

I eat and drink, I dance and play ;
This is my whole employment :
My life is but a summer's day,
But that is all enjoyment.

I kiss the wild clematis vines,
On tangled hedgerows creeping ;
I suck the tubes of sweet woodbines,
In cottage windows peeping.

And then I haunt the meadow scene,
With polish'd kingcaps flooded ;
And round the park's broad belt of green,
With bright laburnums studded.

Away—away, through valleys fair,
Where flames the mustard bloomy;
As if the sun was shining there,
When all around is gloomy.

“I know the bank where wild thyme grows,”
And tinkling flocks are straying;
Whereon the fleecy lambs repose,
Or round the hillocks playing.

I laugh to see the frugal bee,
For others hoard her treasure;
From morn till night a toiler she,
But mine’s a life of pleasure.

The truant schoolboy loves to chase
Me through the winding mazes;
I lure him on a merry race,
O'er meadows white with daisies.

He creeps and crawls with cat-like tread,
When I'm on cowslip rocking;
Then up I flutter o'er his head,
His vain endeavours mecking.

And when the bee is in her cell,
And shrill-tongued cricket calling,
I sleep within the lily's bell,
Whilst nightly damps are falling.

There round my clean white-sheeted bed,
Are pearly dews distilling;
And nightingales, above my head,
Their sweetest notes are trilling.

I dance, I play, make love, and sleep,
This is my whole employment;
For men may smile or men may weep—
My life is all enjoyment.

“ Then to fresh fields and pastures new,”
All in the morning early,
Where poppies red and larkspurs blue,
Gleam in the bearded barley.

A careless rover, blythe and gay,
I pass my sunny hours;
Content, when summer’s past away,
To perish with the flowers.

What if I’m caught in silken net,
By gentle lady dying,
Impaled within her cabinet,
And like a mummy drying!

I would not wish a richer tomb;
She’ll prize me as a treasure;
Nor shall it shade my days with gloom,
For mine’s a life of pleasure.

TRUE AND FALSE FRIENDSHIP.

Oh ! tell me not that beaming eyes,
And smiles that play the heart to win—
That cheeks which own the rose's dyes,
Are emblems of the mind within.
Those sparkling eyes can yet look cold ;
The smile can change to one of scorn ;
The cheek that doth the rose unfold,
Will blush to own me when forlorn.

But words from lips when kindly spoken,
Have caused the hidden tear to start ;
And grasp of hand, in friendly token,
Has sent a thrill unto my heart.
Oh ! tell me not that I shall find,
Amongst the fickle sons of men,
In want or woe, words half as kind,
Or grasp as warm and welcome then.

Oh, no ! for I have seen a flower
By all admired—by one possessed ;
I've seen it plucked, and one short hour
'Twas prized and sheltered in the breast.
An hour hath fled, and I have seen
It with'ring on the dusty way ;
And all passed by a thing so mean,
And left it dying where it lay.

I know that words are only breath,
And promises are writ in sand ;
And those who vowed to love till death,
May be the first by name to brand.
Look on the trees in yonder vale :
O'er all the leaves their mantle cast ;
Yet fall away in autumn's gale,
And leave them bare to winter's blast.

The chain that couples friends together—
Be it of Mammon's shining ore—
If once the golden links should sever,
They walk in fellowship no more.
So bees will swarm, 'tis said, around,
Long as the tinkling music play ;
But, let the metal cease to sound,
They'll sting you first, then fly away.

Whilst those whom virtue hath allied
In love and sympathy together,
Like two young oaks, when side by side,
Are strong to stand in joint endeavour;
The storm may rage—the winds may beat:
With branches locked they stem the blast;
And feel alike the summer's heat,
When winter's storms and rain are past.

L I N E S

ON HEARING A PERSON SAY HE WOULD GIVE ALL THE WORLD
TO BE HAPPY.

Is that the language of the heart,
And are you willing now to part,
With all that you possess ?
Do you consider what you say,
And would you give the world away,
To purchase happiness ?

Say, have you tried the world and found
Its pleasures but an empty sound,
That cannot satisfy ?
And know its honours, wealth, and fame,
The pride of station, place or name,
This jewel cannot buy ?

Oh happiness! the aim of man,
For this he'll toil, contrive, and plan,
 And Hope still leads him on;
When he has this or that attained,
He finds 'tis but a shadow gained—
 The substance, it is gone.

In vain he spends his span of time,
And wearily life's hillocks climb,
 Then down again is hurled.
Who then would make this gem his own,
Must take it on these terms alone,
 By giving up the world.

Who delves the mines for jewels rare
Doth oft the ring and fetters wear,
 Which speak him still a slave;
Or he, where angry billows curl,
Dives down and brings the hidden pearl,
 From underneath the wave.

Let not the thought your heart delude,
That plaudits of the multitude
Will bring what you desire :
The dear delight of bubble praise
Is stubble that will quickly blaze,
And soon again expire.

Hear what the voice of Wisdom cries !
Ye foolish ones, be wise—be wise !
She counsels you to buy—
Without the dross of gold or gain,
The bread that can your soul sustain—
The manna from the sky.

Give up the world with all its joys,
Its shadows, bawbles, trifling toys,
And every cheating pleasure ;
You've tried and proved their worthlessness,
Then let them go—they cannot bless,
And you shall find THIS treasure.

The world, that all enslaving thing—
And Fashion, that despotic king,
O'er all supremely reign :
We groan beneath their tyranny,
And faintly struggle to get free,
But do not break our chain.

We listen to the syren's song,
And o'er life's surges glide along,
Nor think of danger near ;
Till, in the giddy maelstrom drawn,
We whirl and whirl, still down and down,
And end our short career.

Come, let us act a wiser part,
Consult our compass and our chart,
Our pilot's skill confess ;
Resign the helm into his hand,
He'll steer us to a better land—
The port of happiness.

True happiness is not of earth,
'Tis pure and of heavenly birth,
 And cannot dwell with sin.
Search out the heart's deep, secret den,
Cast every idol hence, and then
 The stranger will come in.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. S—H.

Peace to the spirit that has passed away,
No longer grappled by the suffering clay—
Escaped from bondage in this house of pain,
Which, crumbling, falls to mix with earth again !
Approach, ye children, now with tearful eyes ;
See where your kindest benefactor lies,
Who poured instruction in your infant ears,
Untiring through the length of forty years ;
Unswayed by cavillings of those who strove
To hinder or retard his works of love.
Firm and unflinching in the right he stood,
And left no means untried of doing good.

I've seen the man (such men we see but few)—
A man of science (for he science knew)—
With lisping children circling round his knee,
Whom patiently he taught their A, B, C.
Firm in his discipline, yet not severe ;
In morals blameless, grave, but not austere ;
Learned, yet simple ; temperate and mild ;
Could combat error or amuse a child ;
Knew how to curb and rein the headstrong will,
And lead the pliant with as nice a skill ;
Tempered with judgment every useful plan—
A child with children, and with men a man.
His constant aim the village to improve,
He mourned the evil he could not remove.
How would he urge the wandering, heedless youth,
To seek his pleasure in the paths of truth !
He bade the mind in nobler thoughts engage,
And spread the beauties of the sacred page.
Not for himself alone he stored his mind :
His wish—his object was to raise mankind.

He in the field of science took delight,
Knew the velocity of sound and light ;
Weighed and divided the elastic air,
The strength of subtle gases could declare ;
Traced Nature's wonders to their hidden cause,
And argued well on gravitation's laws ;
He caught the lightning in its nimble course,
And chained it down by artificial force.

Well was he known upon the public mart,
In busy commerce bore an active part ;
In traffic honest, faithful to his trust—
His word was sacred, and his dealings just.
But, better far, he had learned himself to know—
The noblest lesson man can learn below ;
Was not ashamed to own himself undone,
And God approached through merits of his Son ;
Built on that rock that could his soul sustain,
On which the raging billows beat in vain.

Oh ! blest Religion, with what soothing power
Thou cheer'st the spirit in the final hour !
In death's dark vale thy cheering light is given,
To show the dying saint a glimpse of heaven ;
Weans the fond heart from all that bound it here,
And lures it upward to that brighter sphere.
When worldly hope and worldly help shall fail—
When wealth, skill, learning can no more avail—
When the pulse ceases, and the dimgrown sight
Proclaims the moment of the spirit's flight,
The wide unknown before her vision lay,
And she must quit her tenement of clay ;
Then, when, the time-wrought mortal fabric falls,
And she stands houseless by the ruined walls—
Then, on thy strength, Religion, she relies,
And gains a glorious mansion in skies.

So the lone mariner, by tempests driven—
Crew lost—bark shattered, and the sails all riven—

To save the vessel tries his utmost art,
Till, finding she must sink and he depart,
One moment lingers on the heaving deck,
Springs to the lifeboat and escapes the wreck;
And, as she founders in the yawning grave,
He rides triumphant o'er the stormy wave,
With rapture hails the welcome, friendly shore,
Where rolling billows cannot reach him more.

TO MY KIND FRIENDS IN LONDON,

MR. AND THE MISSES G——H.

Weary with toiling at the oar,
To keep the storm-tossed bark afloat,
Whilst troubled waves did round me roar,
And almost swamped my shattered boat ;
I found one little sheltered bay—
One little sunny favoured isle ;
And there a week at anchor lay,
Where kindest friends did on me smile.

And thus across the desert hot,
The thirsty pilgrim journeys on ;
Till having found one verdant spot,
Which he may safely rest upon,

With joy he quaffs the cooling springs,
And feels his strength return again ;
His grateful heart in transport sings
He braves once more the dreary plain.

Yet pacing still the cheerless track
With halting steps—by heat oppressed—
His yearning heart will oft go back
Again to that sweet place of rest.
His warmest thanks to Heaven he sends,
And doth in hope his toils renew :
Thus I remember, dearest friends,
The pleasant time I spent with you.

I saw for once the world's wide mart,
And felt bewildered by its size.
What piles of splendour—works of art—
Appeared before my dazzled eyes !—

All that could please my longing sight—
All that could charm the ravished ear—
You gave me all that could delight,
And kindness made it doubly dear.

We wandered where the gardens smile,
With Flora's beauties round us spread ;
And trod the dim and gothic aisle,
Where sleep in peace the mighty dead ;
We walked above the dust of fame,
Where tombs and trophies hemmed us round ;
We read our Shakespeare's honoured name,
And felt we stood on holy ground.

May Heaven give you your reward
For every favour shown to me :
You did not scorn the rustic bard,
Nor slight me for my poverty.

Whate'er may be my future lot,
Long as this fleeting life endures,
Such kindness shall not be forgot,
And my best wishes shall be yours.

LITTLE RILL.

I know a rill, a little rill,
Gliding round the sloping hill,
Creeping under hollow ledges,
Playing bo-peep in the sedges;
Now rushing swiftly out of sight,
Now laughing in the sunny light,
Now hiding darkly, under bushes,
Now leaping over tufts of rushes;

And dancing o'er the shining stones,
To music of its silver tones.

Little rill, merry rill,
Ever springing, little rill,
Ever singing, never still—
Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tinkle;
Sprinkle, sprinkle, sprinkle, sprinkle;
Never still, never still;
Glancing, gliding,
Skipping, sliding,
Little rill, little rill,
Sporting in thy wayward will,
Never still, never still,
Childhood is a little rill.

THE POET.

Deep in the rustic village shade,
Unknown to fame,
A simple, untaught urchin played,
Of humble name.

I knew him when an artless child,
Poor and obscure ;
Before the world his heart defiled,
When thought was pure.

He'd wander in the woods for hours,
And leave his play ;
He loved the trees, the fields, and flowers,
And wild bird's lay.

There was a time-warp'd willow tree
Beside a stream ;
Beneath its shade at noon he'd be,
And sit and dream.

Under the chestnut's broad green crown,
On summer eves,
When silently the stars looked down,
Through trembling leaves ;

He'd watch those gems that nightly glow
Along the skies,
Smiling on all the world below,
Like angels' eyes.

He gave the airy clouds a form,
Of life and limb ;
The hollow howling of the storm,
Was sweet to him.

He sought companionship with few—

A pensive lad :

Men called him, as he older grew,

Moon-struck and mad.

They did not know the calm delight

That filled his breast ;

His wakeful musings in the night,

And they at rest ;

The music floating on the breeze,

That soothed his ear ;

The melody in sighing trees,

That he could hear.

At times in all the village glee

He took a part,

And forced himself to gaiety,

With aching heart :

But oft he sadly stole away,
Alone to weep;
When others in sweet slumbers lay,
He could not sleep.

Then would he read of champions bold,
By field and flood;
And wild romantic tales of old,
Which chilled his blood;

And the soft, witching, measured lines,
Whose numbers roll
O'er the young heart where feeling shrines,
And charm the soul.

Converse he held by Avon's stream,
With Nature's bard;
Sighed o'er the melancholy theme,
Of Abelard;

With Milton scaled the heights of bliss,
In heaven's light,
And saw the dark, profound abyss,
Of endless night;

With Goldsmith traced the winding Po,
Or lazy Scheldt;
In all the lonely wanderer's woe,
A portion felt;

O'er the "Deserted Village" green
In fancy strayed;
Mused on each well depicted scene,
Of "Auburn's" shade;

Stood in wrapt awe at Byron's flight,
With daring wing;
And trembling saw the with'ring blight,
Of Passion's sting.

Himself had nursed a feeble fire,
In secret long ;
At last he strung his rustic lyre,
And chimed a song.

THE SUICIDE'S GRAVE.

Dark—dark is the place of the suicide's grave,
And darkly the long grass doth over it wave;
One tree near the hillock stands bleakly alone,
And the wind through its branches doth heavily moan.

There's a deep, muddy pool, overmantled with green,
The haunt of the snake and the reptiles obscene;
There, loathsome and slimy, the swollen toads croak,
And the lonely crow swings on the half-withered oak.

One night in the year, by that pond's rushy side,
A fearful blue light is seen slowly to glide;
Tradition affirms it gleams from its wave,
And sinks out of sight by the suicide's grave.

The suicide's grave—how deep but unblest!
Unshrouded, uncoffined—a stake through his breast :
How rude and unfeeling to mangle the dead—
To war with the clay when the spirit hath fled!

For him was no priest—no prayers did arise,
Unwept, and unhonour'd, forgotten he lies,
Far away from the village; so that spring's balmy air
Never wafts the sweet sound of the Sabbath bells there.

But there, when the winter's storms dismally howl,
Is heard on the blast the shrill scream of the owl ;
And there the fierce tempest doth fearfully rave,
And the red lightning glares on the suicide's grave.

Who knows what foul demon o'ershadowed his mind ?
Or the snakes of remorse which around him entwined ?
What scourges of conscience, or slanderous breath,
Drove him madly to seek for a shelter in death ?

Was it love unrequited, or jealousy's dart,
Made him cherish the serpent that preyed on his heart?
Was reason so weak as to fall from her throne,
That the wild fiend of madness possessed him alone ?

Did the grim hag of poverty, shrivelled in mien,
Lay her cold hand upon him, so withered and lean?
Did he shiver all night, without shelter or bed,
And plead oft in vain to the wealthy for bread?

Whatever his crimes, they are past and forgot;
Whate'er his misfortunes, the world knows them not;
His name it hath perished, deep under the sod:
He sinned and he suffered—then leave him with God.

Oh! judge not the wretched whom miseries goad,
Till they throw away life as a ponderous load;
Pray—pray, that you never be tempted like them;
Weep—weep for their errors, but do not condemn.

THE OLD LANE.

I like not the road, with its quicks all so trim;
All clipped, cropped, and trained up so neat and so prim.
Give me the green lane, with its shady hedgerow,
Where the woodbine is creeping and blackberries grow;
Where the blackthorn, and whitethorn, and wildbriars meet,
All tangled together, confusedly sweet;
With festoons of bryony, drooping between
The silken-leaved maple and oak's glossy green.

The wide, dusty road is no ramble of mine,
With quick sets so formal, as straight as a line ;
But the long, narrow lane, with its windings and crooks,
Its uphills and downhills, its corners and nooks,
Where I see the green meadows, as smooth as a lawn,
Through gateways and gapways, and acres of corn—
The hamlet's blue smoke curling up by the hill,
And over the tree tops the sails of the mill.

Oh ! dearer these trees in their wildness to me,
Than the training of art in a garden could be,
Where, tortured and straightened by unnatural rules,
They are laced up, and braced up, like ladies in schools.
These bushes and brambles, so tangled and wild,
Run sportive and free as a cottager's child ;
And these boughs I prefer that so gracefully fall
To trees with their arms crucified on a wall.

Sweet, sweet is the lane on a balmy spring morn,
When dewdrops and blossoms hang bright on the thorn ;
And sweet are the banks where the violets peep out,
Where long strings of ivy are creeping about ;
The pink blossom cranesbill, with stems rough and red—
The bashful primrose, always hanging her head—
The bright golden rays of the dwarf celandine,
Like stars, in the herbage do brilliantly shine.

Oh ! this is the bank where Titania might sleep,
Whilst fairies attending their watch round her keep,
So yielding and soft is the green mossy bed,
And oh ! what a canopy's over my head,
All pillared and arched with column and beam,
While soft mellow light through the wild roses gleam ;
And arums all hooded beside of the ditch,
Standing each like a statue set up in a niche !

And here happy children, so sportive and gay,
Come out when the winter hath passed away :
Like bees seeking flowers, how joyous they run,
All bonnetless, capless, browned by the sun,
Some weaving of garlands—some plaiting of frills,
With white fringed daisies or wild daffodills ;
Whilst others are sitting, with infantine pains,
The long dandelion stems linking in chains.

These young human blossoms, so sunburnt and brown,
They would pine in a city, would fade in a town ;
Who'd leave the green fields and the song of the lark
For the clanging of hammers and chimneys so dark ?
Or who the same love for the beautiful feels
'Mid humming of bees and the whirling of wheels ?
Then let them grow up to the dairy and plough,
And oh ! may they always be happy as now.

Where on earth could I find a pleasanter seat
Than this shady old bank in the summer's fierce heat ;
So cool, so fantastic with mosses and shells,
Its roots, and its ivy, and wood sorrel bells—
Where leaves high above me just quivering play,
And sunbeams dance in with a fleckering ray,
And indolent breezes come stealing between,
Diffusing the scent of the clover and bean.

'Tis noon, and the kine have got into the shade,
On the grass gay with buttercups peacefully laid ;
On the stile, almost hidden by hazels so thick,
The whistling cowboy sits notching a stick ;
The haymakers rest in the shade of the oak,
The ploughboys their horses now gladly unyoke,
And homeward returning ride singing along,
Whilst jingling traces keep time to their song.

When the long creeping shadows all point to the east,
And the ringing of scythes in the meadow has ceased,
When the sheep, that had dotted the pasture with white,
Are penned in the fold, huddled up for the night—
When the nightingale's song is first heard in the grove,
And the milkmaid is singing some ditty of love—
When the sweet-breathing cows are straggling home,
Then dearly I love through the green lane to roam.

'Tis joyous to see, on a bright harvest day,
When men are all busy, and merry, and gay,
The heavily laden and lumbering wain
Come slowly and steadily down the green lane ;
And brushing the boughs of the wide-spreading trees—
The oak with its acorns, the ash with its keys,
Whilst dangling ears hang amongst the green leaves,
Which the low bending branches purloined from the sheaves.

Oh! far, far beyond what the artist can dream
Is the lane where the gleaners come forth in a stream,
All healthy and happy, with cheeks glowing red,
And each with a bunch nicely poised on her head ;
Their shrilly toned voices float far on the wind,
Calling loudly to urchins who loiter behind :
The nymphs at a fountain, the vintage of Spain,
Are pictures less dear than this sweet English lane.

And what is the pomp of the conqueror's car,
Bedecked with the spoils and the trappings of war,—
Where long shouts of triumph and boisterous mirth
Pierce deeply lone hearts on some desolate hearth—
To the bough crowned horkey load reeling along,
With laughter and antics, with feasting and song,
And grateful thanksgivings for harvest's increase,
The last crowning blessings of plenty and peace ?

When autumn's cold breath sadly sighs through the trees,
And the sear yellow leaves flutter down on the breeze,
These hedges are beautiful then to behold—
A mixture of orange and scarlet and gold :
When vines of clematis are covered with down,
And hazels are bending with clusters so brown ;
When loud whirring pheasants start suddenly up,
And the smooth polished acorn drops out of its cup.

In winter, when berries shine thick on each spray—
Like coral and jet, as the leaves fall away—
'Tis music to me when the northern winds shriek,
And howl in the tree-tops whose bare branches creak ;
Now whirling the leaves in short eddies around,
Now shaking the spangling rime to the ground,
And low hollow moanings, like songs of the past,
Or wailings of Ossian, sweep down on the blast.

Amongst the improvements by which we're beset,
Some relics of old times are spared to us yet;
Though of maypole, and green, and common bereft,
The lane with its banks and its hedges is left.
Long, long may it be ere the axe or the spade
Shall level these banks or demolish the shade:
Ye refined innovators, oh! do not profane
This haunt of the muses, this shady old lane.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

'Tis the day before Christmas—a clear frosty morn,
And the rime sparkles bright on the old ivy thorn;
Our hearts beat with pleasure—we're off by the train,
And are whirling away to our dear homes again.
The time it seems long, though we travel so fast,
That the houses and trees are all hurrying past;
And more than one station is left far behind,
Where we parted with some of our schoolfellows kind.
We love them all well, yet we part with a smile;
We soon shall be distant by many a mile:
We bid short adieu to our playmates so dear,
But we wish "Merry Christmas and happy new year."

Farewell, for awhile, to restraints of the school;
We are free—we are free from the usher's harsh rule;
Farewell to the jargon of Latin and Greek,
And the Grammar that puzzles us often to speak;
The desks and the books, the birch and the cane,
Farewell to them all—we are off by the train.
We watch from the windows as onward we go—
There's a house we remember, a church that we know;
There's a hedge where, time back, we have birdsnesting
been;
We could see our own home, but the trees intervene.
We have passed through the tunnel, so gloomy and dark,
And the engine now whistles more sweet than the lark;
She is slackening her speed—to the station we're come;
And here's John come to meet us, and take us safe home.
His good-humoured face and his smile are the same;
And the favourite pony, so gentle and tame;
One grasp of the hand, and we jump in the gig,
And John lets us drive, and we feel rather big.

We can see through the trees the old church tower gray,
And the train in the distance is steaming away.
Now welcome again is the sight of the pond,
Where the boys are all sliding the meadow beyond ;
The confectioner's window so tempting to see,
With garnish'd sweet cakes and the green Christmas tree ;
And every cottage and shop that we pass,
The bright-berried holly peeps out from the glass ;
And lighthearted maidens we meet not a few,
With bunches of mistletoe, ivy, and yew.
Ah ! here's the old house—the place of our birth—
Oft thought of, regarded, as dearest on earth ;
Old Rover is rolling himself in the snow,
And barking and frisking his pleasure to show ;
So anxious to meet us he tugs at his chain
And tells us he's glad we're come home again.
Oh ! pleasure to pain thou art nearly allied,
For the tears dim our eyes as the door opens wide :

Our father's kind welcome—the kiss of our mother—
The warm-hearted greeting of sister and brother—
The long look'd for time of our meeting is come.
Oh ! the heart's dearest treasures are garnered at home.
Then the tales that are told, and the laughter and glee—
The conundrums and puns, and the smart repartee—
The plans for to-morrow—the friends we shall meet—
And all the endearments that make home so sweet—
Our learning at school rather proudly displayed—
The encouraging smile at the progress we've made:
Oh ! to feel that each heart throbs in love with our own,
And the pleasure to see how the baby is grown ;
How sweet in our own little chamber to rest,
Returned, like a long absent bird, from its nest ;
Then the whispered " Good night," and the mother's
fond kiss—
We sleep and we revel in visions of bliss.

THE OLD WELL.

Yes! here's the old well, the same as of yore,
Though the gate and the green and the trees are no more,
And gone are the elders, that grew in this nook,
With the stile and the stepping stones over the brook.
The grey sighing willows so shady and cool,
Whose branches bent down till they dipt in the pool.
The spoiler's been here and by rude hands they fell,
I miss them, I mourn them, but here is the well.

Yes! here is the well with its lining of moss,
And the smoothly worn crome lying straightly across,
The rusty hinged lid, and the solid oak frame,
Round which the ground ivy is creeping the same.
The docks and the nettles grow rank by the rails,
Well watered by floods overflowing the pails;
And on the white bindweed hangs many a bell,
And the sweetest of violets grow near to the well.

Old well, thou art here, though so many I knew
Are gone like the waters that from thee they drew.
I still can remember my poor mother's fear,
When a "toddling wee thing" I ventured too near.
Then thy dark yawning mouth made me tremble and shrink,
And I clung to her gown as I peered o'er the brink;
For she said at the bottom a Mermaid did dwell,
Who'd pull in naughty boys if they came near the well.

On a still summer's eve how often I've seen
A smart cottage maiden trip over the green,
With a rose in her bosom, a pail on her arm,
Such time as she knew John would come from the farm:
And why did she wear that high comb in her hair?
'Twas the one that John bought her at last Whitsun fair.
Why did she that nosegay so frequently smell?
Or why did she linger so long at the well?

And why did she sing, as she sat down to rest,
That song of all songs she knew he liked best?
And why did she feign to be frightened and shriek,
When John came behind her and kissed her soft cheek?
And why did she scold him, yet laughed all the while,
And said as he lifted her pail o'er the stile,
" If one gives you an inch you'll be taking an ell?"
Oh ! a deal of coquetting has passed at that well.

O well, thou hast heard many tales in thy day,
When the sun it shone bright on the newly made hay,
Of who were just married or likely to be,
And secrets hidden from urchins like me.
Then some dame would exclaim, "Go, run along, dears;"
And sagely remark "Little pitchers have ears;"
If she wanted some scandal to hear or to tell,
For many a gossip was held at the well.

OH, SAY NOT YOUTH IS FREE FROM
CARE.

Oh, say not youth is free from care—
That sorrows only wait on age :
Oh, no, for childhood claims a share
Of that sad heritage.
It is a burthen man must bear
Through all his pilgrimage.

We know not why the infant grieves,
But watch it in its cradled sleep :
See how its bosom throbs and heaves,
And how it wakes to weep ;
And tears, like rain from summer leaves,
Bedew its downy check.

Stern manhood scoffs the trivial woe
Which wrung his bosom when a boy,
And wonders that his tears could flow
Over a broken toy ;
But golden days of youth, I know,
Are mixed with much alloy.

Who can forget his agony
When first he left his home for school,
His panting after liberty
Beneath the master's rule ;
The tears he shed in secrecy—
His dread of ridicule ?

Yes, even in a boyish game,
When we our utmost skill had tried,
'Twas hard to bear our comrades' blame
Upon the losing side—
To feel the burning blush of shame—
The sense of humbled pride.

When beauty's soft bewitchery
Did first the tender passions move,
Was there no part of misery
With that sweet transport wove—
To feel the rage of jealousy,
And unrequited love?

Youth may be called an April day,
Made up of sunshine and of showers,
Partaking more of March than May,
More thorns than leaves or flowers:
A moment beams the sun's bright ray,
With many cloudy hours.

Then say not youth is free from care—
That sorrows only wait on age:
Oh no, for childhood feels a share
Of that sad heritage.
It is a burthen man must bear
Through all his pilgrimage.

S O L I T U D E .

All alone—all alone ; no body nigh me,
All alone—all alone under the tree :
The peace that the bustling world would deny me
I find, pensive solitude, musing with thee.

All alone—all alone—where streamlets meander,
All alone—all alone in the meadow so gay ;
By the banks of wild thyme my delight is to wander,
When song birds are building, and lambkins at play.

All alone—all alone—on the green moss reclining,
All alone in the wood where the fond ivy clings;
No moaning nor sadness, no grief nor repining,
No song but the lark's as to Heaven he sings.

All alone on the hills, where the sweet scented clover
Invites the far wandering hard toiling bees;
Where the quail it is piping, and screaming the plover,
And the woodpigeon's note steals along on the breeze.

All alone in the valley, when dewdrops are falling,
And the sun has gone down in the rich golden west,
When the shepherd his flocks from the pasture is calling,
And the herds are laid down in the meadow at rest.

S O R R O W .

There is a luxury in woe,
For loss of those whom love endears ;
We would not check the tears that flow,
For there is sweet relief in tears.

There is a sorrow that can melt
The stubborn soul to tenderness ;
The heart is eased where this is felt,
For, though it bleeds, it aches the less.

And there's a ceaseless stream of grief,
Of which the sullen breast partakes,
That by no outlet finds relief,
But swells the heart until it breaks.

Dark, tideless, heavy, cold and deep,
Lies the dead sea of dull despair:
See how he mopes alone to weep—
The hopeless soul who drinketh there.

Yet still he craves the poisoned draughts,
With all the maddening rage of thirst;
The wholesome fount no more he quaffs,
With morbid quenchless longings curst.

How sad to live estranged from all—
Chained down to life's cold rock alone,
Where petrifying sorrows fall,
Which slowly turn the heart to stone!

Oh ! better far—if mourning be—
To let the rainbow gild our sky;
And, if the tears fall heavily,
The sun of hope still shines on high.

When solaced thus, the soul beats high,
And, shaking off her gyves, stands free;
Each sigh becomes a gush of joy—
Each tear a tear of ecstasy.

TO DIE IS GAIN.

What art thou, Death, that at thy name we shiver,
The cheek turns pallid and the blood runs chill?
Each arrow drawn from out thy iron quiver,
Is more an instrument of good than ill.

They are the keys that open heaven's portals,
To souls aweary of the world and sin;
Unlock the passage to the young immortals,
And let the new-born spirits enter in.

Men call thee grim and cruel in their error,
And dread the sternness of thy haggard brow;
'Tis coward fear that paints thee with such terror—
Thy sting's extracted, thou art harmless now.

To die! what is it but to cease from sorrow?
To escape the harpies that do on us prey—
To dread no more the dark uncertain morrow?
Nor feel remorse for acts of yesterday?

To have no cares to harass or perplex us—
Nothing to cramp the wide expansive mind;
To feel no more our evil passions vex us,
But joys unsullied and our love refined.

'Tis to throw off these heavy galling shackles,
That damp the ardour of the spirit's love;
To quit these frail and tattered tabernacles,
For glorious mansions in the world above.

From Satan's bondage to be liberated,
To groan no longer in captivity;
Cast off our fetters, stand emancipated,
A chartered free-man by the Son made free.

To meet with those we loved, no more to sever;
To walk, great Father, blameless in thy sight;
To stand as pillars in thy courts for ever,
And worship in thy temple day and night.

To join the anthems of the Choir Seraphic,
And hear the Lamb in loud hosannas hailed,
In raptures bow before the throne beatific,
And see effulgent Deity unveiled.

To trace at once the past and future histories;
To know the cause from whence effects arise;
To understand great Nature's hidden mysteries,
And read the hieroglyphics of the skies.

'Tis not in dull forgetfulness to slumber—
The ever active spirit cannot sleep;
The casket may decay as useless lumber,
No longer worthy such a gem to keep.

'Tis to cast off the cerements that bound it,
To change its grave clothes for the robes of light;
To burst the Chrysalis, encrusted round it,
And spread its new fledged wings in airy flight.

To rove at will amongst Elysian bowers,
Rejoicing in eternal jubilee;
Garland our temples with undying flowers,
And pluck the fruit from life's immortal tree.

E C H O.

I stood upon the rocky shore,
When loud the billows beat,
And heard the wild waves dash and roar
'Mid foam around my feet.
I saw the white and distant sail
Swell out before the driving gale
To other climates bound;
I heard the screaming white sea-bird,
And then an answering note I heard
Break from the cliffs around.

There was commotion on the sea,
But stillness in that glen;
I called—the echo answered me:
I spoke—it spoke again.

Tell me, thou airy voice, I cried,
In what deep cavern dost thou hide ;
 Where is thy dwelling place ?
Art thou some fairy-elf or sprite,
Or grinning imp, that takes delight
 To mock the human race ?

Art thou some erring spirit chained,
 By strong magician's skill,
For ages in this rock detained
 For doing not his will ?
What was thy crime that thou wert sent
 To dreary long imprisonment ?
 Tell me, what didst thou do ?
Didst thou some vow of silence break,
That now thou art forbid to speak
 But when thou'rt spoken to ?

Close locked within this stony cave
For ages must thou stay,
Until the slowly chafing wave
Shall wear these stones away!
Art thou the oracle of old
That fates of kings and empires told
From out the mystic shrine?
If thou couldst answer questions then—
And raise the hopes and fears of men—
I charge thee answer mine!

Where shall the weary spirit find
A rest from woe?
Where shall the tossed and troubled mind
Sweet quiet know? Not below?
(Echo) Not below!

When shall dull care and sorrow cease
To passions slave?
And shall I find that settled peace
I often crave? In the grave?
In the grave!

Where are the joys that always stay
Unmixed with sighs?
And briny tears are wiped away
From weeping eyes? In the skies?
In the skies!

The sceptre, crown, and kingly sway,
Or jewelled brow,
Wealth, honour, titles—what are they?
Splendid woe?
Splendid woe!

The bard who wastes the midnight oil,
In lowly cot,
And all the day doth sadly toil
Is it his lot to be forgot?
To be forgot!

How shall I climb the rugged steep,
By virtue trod,
Until this weary dust shall sleep
Beneath the sod? Hope in God?
Hope in God!

PAINFUL REMEMBRANCES.

Ah ! why that slow and pensive tread,
And why that sad dejected look ?
Why dost thou sigh and hang thy head,
So like a willow by the brook ?

Age has not bowed thy manly form,
Nor dimmed the lustre of thine eyes ;
But in thy heart some gnawing worm—
Some vampire sorrow, hidden lies.

Look out upon the world abroad,
Unnumbered beauties hem thee round—
The gifts of an indulgent God,
Who waits to heal thy every wound.

His bounteous hand each creature fills,
Makes nature's silent heart rejoice ;
Whilst birds and insects, brooks and rills,
Around us pour a thankful voice.

I saw thee steal from all away
And plunge into this mournful shade :
As if thou loathed the light of day—
Here on the earth I found thee laid.

Forgive thy fond officious friend,
Who in thy sorrows feels a share,
And would some small assistance lend,
And help thy load of grief to bear.

I know that man was made to mourn,
But, if his cup o'erflows the brim,
Who is so wretched and forlorn
That mercy has no balm for him ?

'Twas thus I spoke, and tried to cheer
The moody, melancholy man;
My soothing words called forth a tear.
He grasped my hand and thus began:—

“Alone I sought this quiet dell—
And true I wished to be alone;
But sit you down and hear me tell
What hitherto I've told to none.

“Just wound yon sapling with thy knife,
And mark how long the scar it bears:
So trifles in our early life,
Will colour all our future years.

“I loved, and she I loved was fair,
Young, poor, and simple like to me;
My happiness was centred there,
In sinful mad idolatry.

“The course of true-love as we read
In adverse currents ever run;
Much as I loved this gentle maid,
She loved as much another one.

“Poor girl. she dreamed of love and joy,
But slowly from that dream awoke;
Her heart he prized but as a tey,
And trifled with it till it broke.

“She pined and sickened, drooped and died,
And I (so selfish had I grown,)
Rejoiced she could not be his bride—
As she could never be my own.

“She sleeps within the churchyard lone;
A little hillock marks the spot:
No friend for her has raised a stone—
She seems to be by all forgot.

“But I—though twenty years have passed,—
Remember well that faultless face,
Can see her as I saw her last
And every matchless feature trace.

“Her eyes the mildest lustre shed,
From underneath their silken lash,
Teeth white as pearls, and lips as red
As berries on the mountain ash.

“Her brow was lofty, smooth and fair ;
Her dimpled cheek without a speck ;
Dark—but not black—her flowing hair
Fell down in curls about her neck.

“I loved her ere I hardly knew
The meaning of that pleasing spell ;
And with my years the passion grew
Until it was too strong to quell.

“ ‘Tis bitter when we come to know
That we have loved and loved in vain—
To feel our pure affections flow,
Nor meet the same return again :

“ To see the prize we thought our own
By one more favoured borne away ;
Long cherished hopes for ever flown,
And all our budding hopes decay.

“ I sought from all my grief to hide,
And forced the laugh against my will :
I tried to arm myself with pride—
But spite of pride I loved her still.

“ In festive scenes where all were gay
My heaviness would most intrude ;
Then, sad at heart, I’ve stolen away
And sought relief in solitude.

“ And then I loved the trees and flowers—
The silent wood and lonely walk—
And in these melancholy hours
With nature’s self I learned to talk.

“ But saw her eyes in violets blue—
Her lips in berries on the trees—
Her cheeks in roses, wet with dew—
And heard her whisper in the breeze.

“ Then fancies strange would me beguile—
I wished unknown alone to dwell,
A Crusoe on some distant isle,
Or hermit in a lonely cell.

“ When from the soul the music’s fled,
The softest strains, the sweetest air,
Falls tuneless on the heart of lead,
And wakes no answering echo’s there.

“ I passed my youth in sluggish dreams,
And let my talents buried lie;
My love I’d poured in lavish streams
That left the fount for ever dry.

“ Dull, cheerless, aimless, and distrest,
No energy to me was given;
I lost my peace, my sleep and rest,
And almost lost my hope of Heaven.

“ I had a mother, kind and good—
Alas! that heavy word I had—
Who wept to see my wayward mood;
But knew not all that made me sad.

“ She had no other son but me;
I was her joy—her hope—her pride:
And her I lost—Oh! misery—
This kind, this best of mothers died.

“Alone on life’s long dreary road,
Where barren rocks did o’er me frown,
I limped along beneath my load,
And longed for evening to lie down.

“I felt it sad to be alone;
And, reckless what my fate might be,
I wove my gloomy fate with one,
And dragged her down to misery.

“Thus does a drowning creature clasp
The one who tries the wretch to save,
And locked within his tight’ning grasp,
Both helpless sink beneath the wave.

“Oh love! where’er thy current flows
Thou makest a home to heaven akin,
O’er every fault thy mantle throw,
And hidest a multitude of sin.

“ But how man’s noblest ardour’s damped
When duty only doth him move ;
Dull measured duty cold and cramped
That wretched substitute for love.

“ I trust it never was thy lot
To struggle with such grief as I ;
Oh ! no, I’ve visited thy cot
When love beam’d bright from every eye.

“ In envy then I’ve turn’d away,
Contrasting my dark fate with thine ;
Thy home was cheerful as the day,
When gloomy night o’ershadowed mine.

“ You say that nature smiles for me—
You tell me all around is fair :
But look into the heart and see
What hosts of evils shelter there.

“ Farewell, 'twas here I often came
In days gone by, beneath this tree:
Alone I fed this hapless flame
That slowly was consuming me.

“ Its stillness yet doth calm my mind,
When threat'ning storms my skies o'ercast:
I here a painful pleasure find,
In looking back upon the past.”

ON DREAMS.

Ye dreams—ye dreams—ye airy dreams,
That haunt my pillow in the night,
When the prolific fancy teems
With things too fair for waking sight.
Tell me, ye bright and dazzling host,
What distant orb ye make your own?
Are ye the wreck of something lost,
Or shadows of a world to come?

When what is clay inactive lies,
What fairy scenes I wander through !
Immortal flowers around me rise,
That nowhere but in Eden grew.
Perhaps the watchful cherubim,
Who guard the gate with jealous care,
Permit in sleep the pilgrim
(And but in sleep) to enter there.

Oh ! there are dreams from which to wake,
'Tis agony—so sweet they are :
And can creation's fancy make,
From empty nothing worlds so fair ?
Oh ! better could these dreams remain
To sleep so calm and free from strife,
Than e'er to wake and taste again,
The cold realities of life.

THE DAYS WHEN WE WERE YOUNG.

LINES ADDRESSED TO MY FRIEND AND PLAY-FELLOW

R. B., WESTON COLVILLE.

Oh, the days—the happy days—
For ever passed away,
When light of heart we frolicked free,
Through the long summer's day.
We chased the sportive butterfly,
Or on the old gate swung;

So balmy was the spring of life,
And rosy were the hours!
'Twas Eden all around us then,
Our way was strewn with flowers.
The lambs that gambolled in the mead,
The birds that o'er us sung,
Were not more free from care than we
In days when we were young.

Among the thronging cares of life
Bright faces on me beam;
Companions of my youthful sports
Come back as in a dream.
I think upon the moonlight nights
Where merry laughter rung
From playful urchins on the green,
When you and I were young.

How smooth the path of life appeared—
How bright the future then!
Did we not chide our tardy growth,
And wish that we were men?
What has that manhood brought us now
But hearts with anguish wrung,
And vain regrets when looking back
To days when we were young?

We have but shared the common lot—
Then let us not repine:
Through clouds that overshadow us
Some rays of hope still shine.
The darkest shade of sorrow's wing
That yet has o'er us hung
Could not eclipse our friendship's light,
That beamed when we were young.

RETALIATION.

"Why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye?" &c., &c.

The dew sparkled bright on the green budding thorn,
And the birds were assembled on Valentine's morn;
'Twas a grand wedding party so jovial and gay,
That met in the wood on that Valentine's day.
The first and the foremost was old Parson Rook,
And then Mrs. Wagtail that lives by the brook,
The Finches, and Linnets, and musical Lark,
Whom you know long ago always acted as clerk;
Old Jackdaw and Magpie, the Cuckoo, and then
The Thrush and the Blackbird, the Robin and Wren,
While old councillor Owl in his wise looking wig,
Sat napping his eyes on an ivy grown twig.

The Sparrow dropped in, although not invited.
And begged them to tell her why she was so slighted.
"I think I can tell you," says Robinredbreast;
'Tis because your character is none of the best;
You're given to mischief and pilfering tricks,
That no birds of respect in your company mix."
"And then" said the Goldfinch, "your dress is so meagre,
I would not for worlds in such colours be seen:
For my part I detest all such quaker-like things."
And she fluttered to shew the bright gold on her wing.
The Rook said, her actions disgraced other birds;
And the Lark, as in duty bound, echoed his words.
The Blackbird remarked that it would not be wrong,
If one of the party would give them a song:
"Very sweetly you sing, Mrs. Sparrow, I'm told:
I'd sing one myself but I have such a cold."
"Do Ma'am," said the Linnet, "we all should rejoice
To hear you—you have such a beautiful voice.
Somebody has said you can tell me the reason,
That one without music is fitted for treason."

Thus some of them scolded and some of them jeered her ;
Others hissed, more mocked, and none of them cheered her.
The Magpie and Jackdaw were chatting away
Some outlandish jargon along with the Jay :
The Finches and Linnets, like birds of a feather,
Were talking of fashion, the news, and the weather :
The Blackbird had mounted up high in a bush,
To join in a glee with the Robin and Thrush :
The Rook he was talking of tythes with the Lark ;
And the sleepy old owl said he wished it was dark.
The Sparrow now said she felt much inclined
Ere she left just to give them a bit of her mind.
" For," said she, " you've been trying my feelings to hurt,
But folks always get soiled if they meddle with dirt ;
I'll begin, Mr. Robin, with you for the first,
I believe in this set you are one of the worst ;
I dare say you think that you look very fine
In that dingy brown coat and red waistcoat of thine :
You always pretend to great friendship with man ;
But 'tis only we know to get all you can.

Don't you think I believe all the fables of old,
And the tales of yourself you so often have told,
How you covered with leaves the poor babes in the wood,
Thus making yourself so kindhearted and good:
Poor credulous children won't meddle with you,
Oh! no they all have broken bones if they do.
So you hop round the door when the cold winter comes,
And gammon them out of a handful of crumbs.
'Come Bobby, come Bobby,' the silly ones cry—
I wish that they knew as much of you as I;
They'd soon send you off with a flea in your ear,
Or some shot in your tail, if you dared to go near.
Now answer one question—I won't ask another—
That is, what became of your father and mother?
I'll answer it for you—'twas by you that they died,
And 'tis very well known you're a base parricide.
And you, Parson Rook, to attack you I'm loth—
I wish to pay proper respect to the cloth—
Yet Rooks, I am told, cannot always agree,
For you, each of you, want the tip top of the tree.

There's the meek widowed Dove, that lives in the grove,
And pretends so to mourn for her late buried love,
She has long been held up as a pattern wife—
Yet never could make a good nest in her life;
She is cooing, and moping, and sighing all day,
One would think that her life was melting away:
Why, 'tis all affectation—I see through it plain—
And as soon as she's asked she will marry again.
Not one of you all, though you hold your heads high,
Attends to her family better than I.

There's you, Mrs. Cuckoo, bawl all the day long,
From morning till night the same tiresome song,
And think you can sing, when you very well know,
That the boys always mock you wherever you go;
That you pilfer from others, and, what is far worse,
You leave your own brats for another to nurse.

The Finches and Linnets so proud of their notes
Sit trilling and piping and straining their throats;
The valleys and woods with their music are ringing
Thank goodness I don't get my living by singing,

Though this I suppose is a musical age ;
But they all run the risk of being put in the cage.
They choose all their dresses for glitter and glare,
But mine if less gay is the colour to wear.
Signor Blackbird can rival the soft breathing flute,
But always appears in that rusty old suit ;
Even I would not have such a dress on my back,
If black I must wear why let it be black ;
With the talents he boasts of I'd certainly scoff
A dress that looks like what somebody left off.
You may say what you please, but I don't care a rush,
If my conduct be such as to cause you to blush ;
But your delicate feelings would better be shown,
If you each of you blushed at some faults of your own."
I might have heard more, but a boy with a gun
Stepped over the hedge and ended the fun ;
He fired it off, causing such an affright,
That all of them sought their own safety in flight.

THE TOPER'S LAMENT.

Come listen now, ye topers all,
Who love the flowing can,
And warning take by my downfall—
For I'm a fallen man.

Oh! I have spent my time and cash
With publicans and sinners;
But they have settled now my *hash*,
And robbed me of my *dinners*.

To "*Horse and Groom*" I owe a bill—
At "*Horseshoes*" an arrear—
I've helped to fill their *till* until,
I've not a *shoe* to wear.

To pay my tribute to "*The Crown*,"
I've parted with my "togs;"
And going oft to "*The Greyhound*,"
Has brought me to the *dogs*.

The "*Black-Horse*" being thorough-bred
Of course I could not shun:
And I have had my face quite red
By sitting in "*the Sun*."

"*The Fountain*" clear for me had charms,
But now I taste the *dregs*;
And when at night I left "*The Arms*,"
I could not keep my *legs*.

I like the *beer* at the "*Black-Bear*,"
The *brewing* of old *Bruin*:
The "*Star and Moon*" both *beacons* were
To light me to my *ruin*.

There was a time I used to think
The "*White-Hart*" was a *Deer* ;
But there I cannot get a drink
My heavy heart to cheer.

The old "*White-Lion*" grins at me,
So jeering as I pass ;
The "*Golden*" one is gilt I see
With portions of my *brass*.

The "*Marquis*" now on me doth frown,
Since I'm of tin bereft :
I've been so loyal to "*The Crown*,"
I've not a *half one* left.

"*The Waggon*" keeps its easy pace
With slow and steady team :
The "*Railway Tavern*" is the place
For getting up the *steam*.

The drivers both can drink and sleep
And care not what I feel;
They know I can no longer keep
My *cart* upon the *wheel*.

They fleeced me like a *silly sheep*
To swell the "*Woolpack's*" treasure;
And if I in "*The Bushel*" peep,
They *Strike* me with the *measure*.

Not one of all these jolly ones
Will stand a pint of stout:
I've tried so much at "*The Three Tuns*,"
At last they turned me out.

"*Speed the Plough's*" a good old toast,
With me a favourite sign:
The "*Elder Bush*" I liked almost
As well as *Elder wine*.

I loved the "*Duke of Wellington*,"
As all good Britons do;
But now my *Wellingtons* are gone,
Aye, and my *Bluchers* too.

The "*Wheatsheaf*" yields me nought but *chaff*,
Where once my cup was full;
Too late I find I am a *calf*,
For going to "*The Bull*."

The "*Lamb*" for me is too genteel—
A choice expensive dish:
To see the "*Dolphin*" makes me feel
As dry as any *fish*.

I once was noticed by the *swells*,
But now they *shrink* from me:
I think now when I pass the "*Bells*,"
One soon will pass for me,

To all my former friends I've been,
But sympathy have found none;

~~My last appearance was at the Queen's~~
~~My next will be at the Devil's~~

~~What's the difference, I'm not dead yet,~~
~~but now you see my grave~~
~~And a son I had I can't~~

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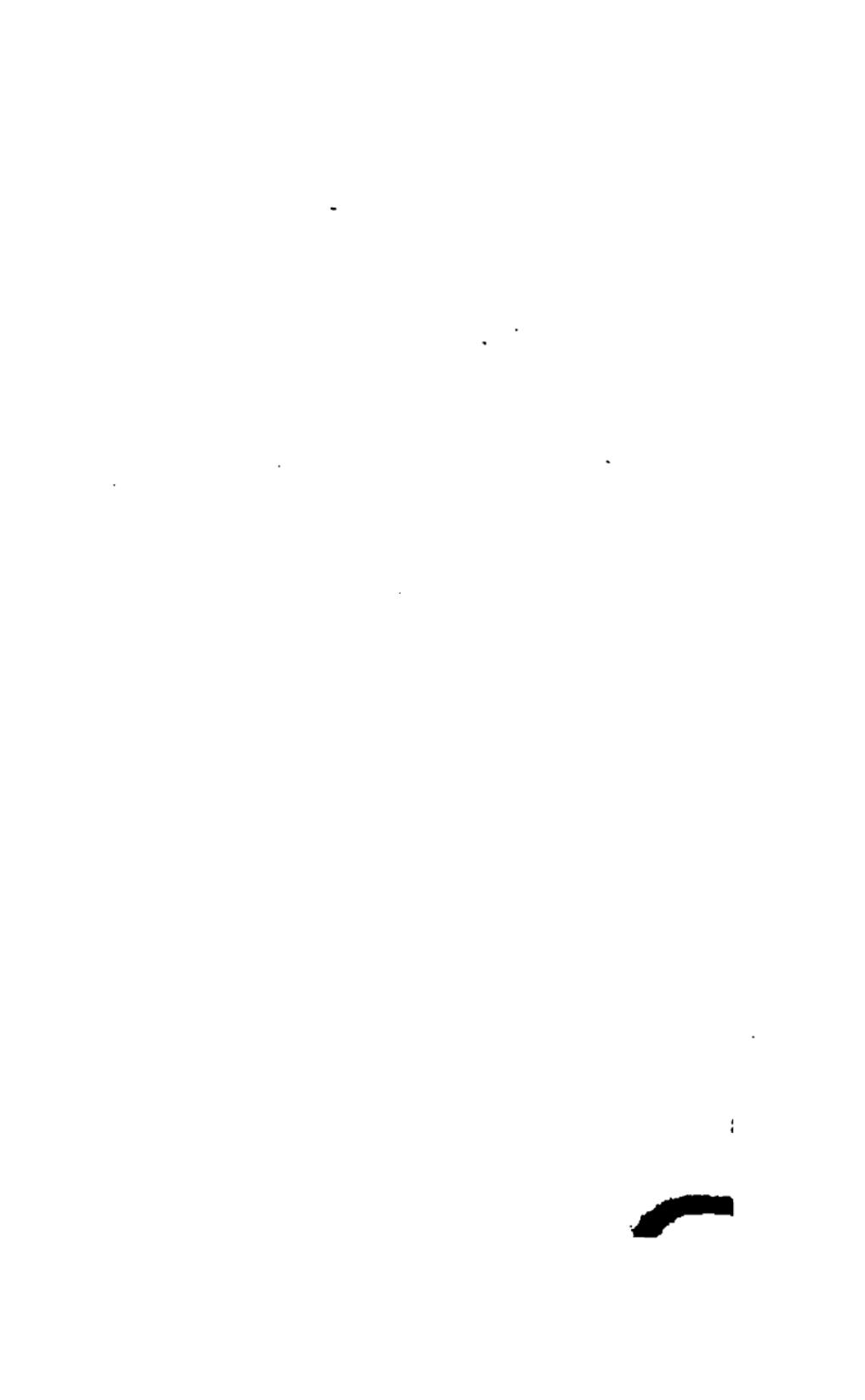
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